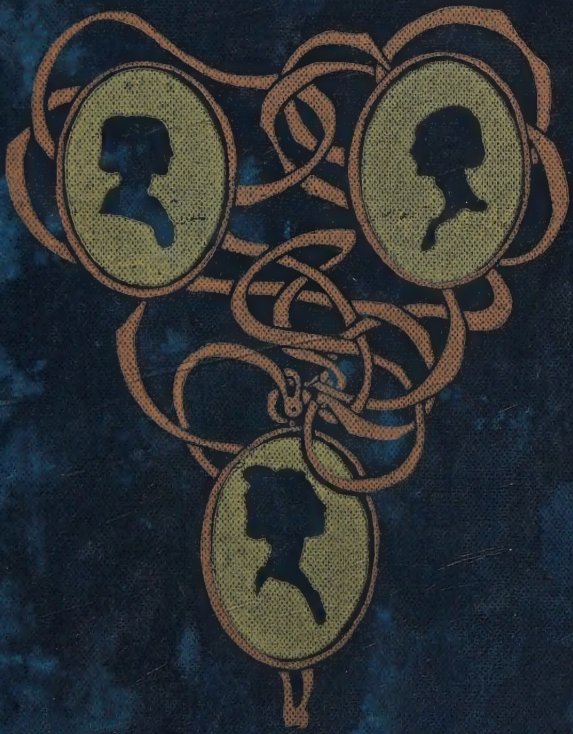
THREE · SCOTTISH HEROINES



THREE SCOTTISH HEROINES

"Presenting her pistol, she said, 'Not another step nearer, on your life.'"
Page 107.

THREE · SCOTTISH HEROINES

"*Grizel Hume was busy in her garden.*" Page 13.

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THREE SCOTTISH HEROINES

BY

ELIZABETH C. TRAICE

Author of "Mistress Elizabeth Spencer," "Wee Doggie," "All in a Garden Green," &c., &c.

THOMAS NELSON AND SONS

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THESE STORIES

ARE

Dedicated

TO MY BELOVED DAUGHTER, THE LATE

ALICE TRAICE

BY HER MOTHER

PREFACE.

THESE three stories are founded on facts. In that of Winefred, Lady Nithsdale, the account of her wonderful adventures, and the difficulties she encountered in her successful endeavours to save her husband's life, is to be found in a letter to her sister-in-law, the Countess of Traquair, now in the possession of the Society of Antiquarians of Scotland.

The story of Grizel Hume's trials has been narrated by her daughter, Lady Murray of Stanhope.

E. C. TRAICE.

LEAMINGTON.

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THE STORY OF GRIZEL HUME.

THREE SCOTTISH HEROINES.

THE STORY OF GRIZEL HUME.

1684.

CHAPTER I.

> "Strength in her gentleness, hope in her sorrow,
> Whose darkest hours some ray of brightness borrow
> From better days to come."

GRIZEL HUME was busy in her garden, early one summer morning in 1684, tying up to a rude lattice reared against the massive walls of Redbraes Castle a climbing rose-tree, heavy with its scented blossoms. There was but little land about the old castle that was under cultivation, but what there was showed signs of her loving care. At the present moment she was so happily engrossed in arranging the luxuriant branches of her favourite tree that she started as a voice, softly calling to her, said,—

"Mistress, can ye no tell me how I maun get

speech wi' Leddy Hume? I hae a bit thing to gie her."

"Bide a wee," answered Grizel quietly.

They were such troublous times that, alarmed as she was by a strange voice speaking to her, she did not leave the tying up of a bunch of blossoms till she had properly secured them, or turn her head towards the speaker. Quickly finishing, she put her tools into her big apron-pocket, and moved with calm step to the other side of the buttress, in the angle of which her roses grew. There she found a little ragged laddie, his unbonneted hair in tangled locks, blown by the wind and wildly straying about his sunburnt face, his plaid all in disorder, and his bare legs and feet covered with dust. He was breathing heavily, and looked hot and tired; but he raised his clear blue eyes wistfully to Grizel's face as she said,—

"Aweel, laddie, an' what may ye be wantin' wi' my Leddy Hume?"

"Are ye my leddy?" asked the boy doubtfully.

"No, but I'm her daughter; ye can speak to me."

"An' will ye gie her this?" said the laddie.

"This!" said Grizel in surprise, as she took from the boy's fingers a feather from a woodcock's wing. "What for do ye gie this to me?"

"I dinna ken," he answered. "A leddy ca'd me

as I was tentin' my goats, an' bid me rin to Redbraes like the win', an' gie it to Leddy Hume."

"An' nae ither word than that?" asked Grizel.

"Nae mair than the bit feather. An' she gied me a braw siller penny," said the boy, displaying his treasure.

"What leddy was it sent ye?" asked Grizel.

"I dinna ken; 'twas ower yonder." And he stretched out a long, lean arm to indicate the way he had come.

Grizel stood with a puzzled expression, thoughtfully turning the feather in her fingers, when suddenly a vivid colour overspread her face, and she raised her head quickly.

"Sit ye down, laddie," she cried; for the boy, having done as he was bidden, was moving somewhat reluctantly away. "Sit ye down while I fetch ye bit and sup; an' here's anither siller penny for ye." So saying, she left him and ran to the hall door.

Soon she was back again with bread and meat and a stoup of ale, which the boy received with eager, hungry looks, nor needed any invitation to fall to, while Grizel watched him with impatience written in every feature.

When the boy had finished his meal—and, indeed, the poor laddie was not long about it—Grizel smiled her dismissal.

"Now rin awa to your goats; an' gin ye see the

bonnie leddy wha sent ye, say that Grizel Hume is ower much behoven to her for the token that she has won her wager. I'll no forget to pay it."

The boy was gone even as she spoke the last words, and Grizel was hurrying to the castle, when, hearing a step upon the stony path, she turned to find it was Jamie Winter, Sir Patrick's carpenter, who was sexton and clerk at Polwarth Church, and general helper and factotum in the family he served so faithfully.

"The very man I want," she exclaimed, dropping the Scottish tongue in which she had spoken to the little herdsman—"the very man! Jamie, good friend and true, I was but now coming to seek you. I have a token here; I can guess well who sent it to me. 'Tis well I understand its meaning. There's danger in the wind that blows a feather like this into my hand; it means flight, and that swift. Jamie, you know how often we have looked for this moment, when my dear father will no longer be safe in his own home, and what we have planned to do. Redbraes has no hiding-place in its old walls that would be safe against a search. There is nowhere but the uncanny lodging you wot of; so go, good Jamie, at once, and put as much of comfort in it as you can, while I go to warn my father and help him to get away."

"I ken weel," said Jamie Winter in a low voice, and looking carefully round for fear of listeners, "that Sir Patrick is no safe in his ain hoose. The Duke o' York kens a' aboot the doin's o' them as wad keep him oot o' the succeesion; thanks to the meesarable cre'turs wha, to save their ain worthless skins, ha' telt a' they kenned—ay, an' mair than a'. An' noo, no content wi' thrawin' gudely heads abawt broadcast, an' spillin' bluid like watter i' London city, he is sendin' doon to the Council o' Edinbro' a' the Scottish lairds an' gentry concerned i' the plot, to be 'examined,' as they ca' it, here. The gude God ha' peety on 'em!"

Jamie paused, and Grizel drew a deep quivering sigh, and motioned him to go on.

"Robert Baillie o' Jerviswood is i' the Tolbooth, an' Spence—Argyle's sekertary—an' Carstairs, an' ithers nae dout, ha' been sent there for Council to 'examine.' Ye ken what that means, Mistress Grizel?"

"Indeed I do, Jamie. But what of my father? Time is short."

"I'll awa at aince," he answered. "But I'm forgettin'; I maun hae the key."

"The key?" questioned Grizel.

"Ay. Mebbe ye dinna ken hoo the vault opens. 'Tis lang syne 'twas sae, Gude be thankit. The stane

is i' the kirk wall, an' slides back on stane rinners—nae dout fu' o' grit an' fa'en leaves, which maun be clearit oot. 'Tis the lock I'm thinkin' abawt, an' Sir Patrick hauds the key."

"I'll go to him at once," said Grizel. "I trust he has not gone away since I came out here."

In a few minutes she was back again with the key. As Winter took it from her, he looked into her flushed face, and said gently, "Puir brave lassie! Dinna fear but ye'll save him. I'm thinking there's a braw whin-bush grows over against the stane will hide baith me an' oor operations." And with that he left her.

Grizel stood for a few moments watching his retreating figure. Jamie Winter's few sympathizing words brought the tears into her eyes; but they were bright again with hope when she again met her father.

The words that had passed between them when she had obtained the key were but few, but they had been of sufficient import to inform Sir Patrick of his danger, and of the necessity of immediate precaution. She found him in his long-disused library, that but for Grizel's daily attention would have been musty and mildewed, so much of his time of late years having been spent on political schemes, and away from home. He was busy tying up some few

books, of which Buchanan's Version of the Psalms was his chief care; some papers of consequence to preserve, should a search take place; and writing materials.

"But, my father," said Grizel, "how will you see in that darksome place?"

"There is a chink in the stone on the outer side of the vault, my child, which will let in a little of heaven's light while it lasts. I must be satisfied with that, for I dare not burn a lamp to light the path for my enemies. And now, Grizel, when must I set forth on this uncanny journey?"

"At once, I think," said Grizel; "I am wanting you away—nay, sir, I do but mean I long for you to be in safety." And she clung to his neck as his arm folded round her. "I have been thinking what to do: go to my mother, tell her you have been warned and are going away again, but do not say where. I will tell her when the search is over; for that will come, I know, I am sure—"

Her voice failed her, and for a moment she seemed to lose all strength, while he softly smoothed her hair and murmured caressing words. Soon she rallied, and went on,—

"You must ride Sidney, your favourite horse. You have always had him. It will not do for him and his saddle to be found at home. Well the

hawks would know that the bird they seek could not fly without his wings." And she laughed with something of her natural gaiety, this sweet girl of nineteen years, so early trained to meet trouble. "And you must take the opposite direction to Polwarth Kirk, and—well, you know how to skirt by byways round to it, where I'm sure you'll find Jamie waiting for you behind the whin-bush he tells me of. You must have your cloak and everything as if you go for a long journey; and for the rest, dear father, you must trust in your Grizel and Jamie. You will—you can?"

"I can, and I do, dear child," her father answered, kissing her fondly. "God has been good to me in giving me such a daughter. Grizel," he said earnestly, "Heaven helping me to escape this present peril, we will leave this groaning land, much as I love it, till better times, which must come some day —ay, some day."

Then he left her, and passed into Lady Hume's room—where we will not follow—to bid her once more "farewell." Too soon for her the parting was over; and in the presence of his wife and family, and all the sorrowing domestics, Sir Patrick rode off, equipped as for a lengthened journey.

CHAPTER II.

"Those who hide can find."

NOR was this strategic movement accomplished much too soon. Some six hours later, a search party, composed of an officer and twenty soldiers, arrived at the castle, as Grizel had confidently predicted. But in the meantime Jamie Winter had not been idle. After seeing Sir Patrick safely and comfortably bestowed, as far as the gruesome nature of his prison would allow, he rode that gentleman's favourite horse away to a distant farm in the hills, belonging to his father, who was a stanch adherent to the Protestant faith, and a sincere well-wisher to Sir Patrick Hume and those who strove for the cause, and who mourned the many who had suffered. There Jamie left the beautiful creature Sidney—so named after Sir Patrick's unfortunate friend, Algernon Sidney —with instructions that he was to be cast loose on the third day, well knowing that the faithful beast would make his way back to the castle and his own stables;

thereby suggesting that his master had abandoned him in his flight to the coast, where he would no longer need him.

In spite of Grizel's warnings, Lady Hume's nerves were visibly shaken when the clatter of horses' hoofs was heard in the courtyard, followed by the short, sharp words of command and the tramp of military boots in the great hall.

"Mother," whispered Grizel, "be calm. Thank God they cannot find what is not here."

"My leddy is in her ain room," said old Donald, their ancient servant of many years, "and is but puirly. Sin' ye will tell—"

"Stand aside, old man!" And the speaker, without further ceremony, pushed the door open and entered the apartment. Barely even raising his hand in military salute, he stalked into the centre of the room; but before he could speak Lady Hume rose and said,—

"Excuse me, sir; surely there is some mistake. You enter my private room unannounced, and I have not the pleasure of knowing either your name or your business."

"My business is set forth in this warrant, madam," answered the officer, drawing a huge document from his breast and handing it to the lady, who received it with a shaking hand, "which is to arrest Sir Patrick

Hume and convey him before the Council, to answer to the charge of conspiring against the State."

"I am thankful to say, sir, that Sir Patrick is not here. He left—"

"That will do, mother," said Grizel quietly. Then she turned to the officer. "Lady Hume has told you the truth. Sir Patrick is away."

"Of that we must satisfy ourselves," he returned bluntly, and looking keenly round the room.

"Certainly," said Grizel. "Let us go, madam." And she was leading Lady Hume from the room, when the officer stepped quickly between them and the door by which he had entered, saying,—

"Excuse me, madam. Be good enough to stay where you are while the search is made."

He again glanced keenly round the apartment, and then deliberately sounded the panels which lined the walls; and finding more than one closet, besides another door which opened on a passage, he locked them one after another, and took possession of the keys.

"I pray you, sir," said Grizel, with a half-amused smile on her lips, "to let us have those keys again when you release your prisoners. We shall be in a sorry plight for some of the necessaries of life if you forget to restore them."

"I am but fulfilling my duty, young madam."

"And I mine, sir," answered Grizel, "in reminding you of it."

He looked at her grimly, but said no more, till, reaching the door of exit, he turned to inform the ladies that a guard was posted in the hall, and that for their own sakes they had better remain quiet.

"Have no fear, sir," said Lady Hume, as she turned to resume her seat.

When the door closed behind the officer, and they heard the clanking steps passing up and down passages and stairs, and the hurried voices of the servants as they were roughly questioned, Lady Hume sank back in her chair with tears in her eyes. "O Grizel," she said, "why did you make that hard man angry?"

"I did not say much, dear mother," said the girl, looking in her face with a smile.

"No; but it was the way you spoke. It was almost like taunting him."

"O my mother, I cannot tell you how hard it was not to laugh in his face, in my joy that, search as he will, he will not find Sir Patrick. Does not that thought give comfort to you too?"

A quarter of an hour or more passed while the echoing tramp of men, the clank of military accoutrements, the slamming of distant doors, and the sound of voices reverberated through the old castle. The

two ladies sat motionless, listening intently. At last Lady Hume said,—

"And the poor bairns, Grizel?"

"Juliana is too little to be frightened, mother; and I told the boys and Christina what they must expect. They are brave laddies. Every one in the house saw him ride away, so there cannot be two stories told."

Lady Hume sighed. "I wish it was over," she exclaimed.

"Courage, dear mother," said Grizel gently.

Just then the noises seemed to concentrate in the hall beyond their apartment, and presently the same officer opened the door and bade them come forth. In the hall they found their whole household, old and young servants, with scared faces, crowding together as if for protection. Lady Hume's younger children, too, had been brought from their rooms, Juliana clinging to her nurse's skirts with eyes wide with wonder. The boys flew to their mother's side, Patrick, the elder one, proudly taking her hand, as if to protect her; and the younger ones, Andrew and Sandy, ranging themselves by their sister Grizel.

The pause that ensued was broken by the entrance of two soldiers, bringing with them the stable men and boys.

"Well," said the officer sternly, "what have you to report?"

One man stood forward and saluted.

"Naething at a', your honour. We found nane hidin' in barn or byre. Ane stall, wi' 'Sidney' writ muckle big above, is empty. The laddies a' tell how Sir Patrick saddled his horse wi' his ain hands this mornin', and rode awa airly."

"At what time, madam?" asked the officer, turning to Lady Hume.

"About seven o'clock," she answered.—"Am I right, Grizel?"

"Yes, mother, about that time."

"And in which direction did he go?" demanded the officer.

"Is that a fair question, sir?" replied Lady Hume with spirit. "I think it is not."

"Perfectly," he answered. "Your servants have already told me he took the road towards Berwick. I ask you if that is the truth?"

"It is. We have told you nothing else."

"And was Berwick his destination?" persisted the officer.

"I do not know," was the answer. "Sir Patrick did not tell me—he would not tell me. And," said Lady Hume indignantly, "if I did know, I would not tell you."

A curious smile crossed his lips, and there was a moment's pause; then he turned to Grizel.

"And you, young madam—did Sir Patrick tell you he was riding to Berwick?"

"No."

"Did he tell you where he was going?"

"No, sir, he did not," said Grizel firmly.

"We waste time," he said sharply, taking his watch from his pocket. "Seven o'clock, and it is now nearly two! Seven hours' start!" he muttered. "It is useless to follow, if he was bound for Berwick. He has got clear off by this time.—Madam," he said aloud, turning to Lady Hume, "I congratulate you. We soldiers are not always as brutal as we are compelled to seem. We have failed to bring down our quarry, and I congratulate you. But my men have had a long march, and will have another before they reach their quarters in Edinburgh; and, in short, madam, we are hungry, and crave your hospitality."

"And shall have it, sir," said Lady Hume frankly. And though from her heart she wished them all well away and clear of her gates, she gave her orders for a plentiful meal of beef and bread and beer to be served. It took the willing servitors but a few minutes to set up the trestle-tables and spread the board with the welcome viands, and not many more before the men had fallen to, and satisfied their hunger, and were really on their road back to Edinburgh.

Then, and not till then, when the last sounds of

the retreating troopers had died away in the distance, did Lady Hume draw a deep sigh of relief, and for a moment a smile lighted up her anxious face. The next her fears returned.

"O Grizel!" she exclaimed, "how can we feel secure that your dear father will not yet be discovered? Even on this return march the soldiers may come across him. We do not know where he is gone or taken refuge, so that we can feel no security, no peace of mind. Grizel, how can you laugh?"

The children had trooped into their mother's room, loudly discussing the events of the morning, Patrick in particular assuming a very martial air as he strove to repress the clamour of his younger brothers.

Grizel could not explain, neither could she altogether hide the abounding delight which prompted her to dance for joy, or shout with the children, or any other extravagant action. Still smiling, and with eyes gleaming with suppressed mirth, she said,—

"Because"— and she stopped, struggling to regain her gravity as she read reproof in Lady Hume's eyes —"because I am so happy; I cannot help it."

"Foolish child," said Lady Hume gravely; and for the moment the thought crossed her mind that this much-loved daughter was wanting in true affection. It was the first time she had ever suspected such a

thing, and she dismissed the unwelcome idea the next moment. But Grizel's manner still puzzled her.

"Now get you gone, bairnies," said Grizel, "an' tak a' yer clavers wi' ye. Dinna ye see the mither is juist wantin' a wee bit o' peace after a' the gran' visitors we've had? Awa wi' ye!" And she shook her white skirts at them as though she were driving a flock of geese, and hustled the urchins out of her mother's room. Then she turned with dancing eyes towards Lady Hume.

"Grizel, child, what ails you?" For well her mother knew that it was only in her daughter's merriest moods that she spoke the Scottish tongue.

"Joy, my mother; joy ails me. I have had hard work to keep my secret. But listen, whisper; the very walls must not hear. Father is safe, and not far away from us; he is—where think ye, mother?"

"Nay, child, I—I do not understand. I thought he went off to Berwick, and was perhaps by this time on some fishing smack bound for Holland."

"And so every one thinks. But he is hiding in —don't be frightened, mother—in the Polwarth vault."

Lady Hume's lips formed the word vault, but her astonishment was so great that she uttered no sound.

"O my dear mother, I pray thee look not so scared. It was the only place of real safety I could

think of. Jamie Winter and I planned it as a refuge as soon as my father came home to us. We knew he would not be safe long."

"But, Grizel, you said you did not know where your father was. O my child, that was a lie, then."

"No, mother, it was no lie, but as bad; for my answer deceived him, as it did you. But it was 'mair by luck than gude guidin',' as folks say, that I could reply as I did."

"Surely, surely, Grizel, I heard you say you did not know where Sir Patrick was."

"No, mother; you are mistaken. The officer asked if my father had told me he was riding to Berwick, and I said 'No;' and then he asked me if he had told me where he was going, and again I said 'No,' which was truth—in a way."

"How?" asked her mother in surprise.

"Because it was *I* told my father where to go, and he told me nothing."

"I am afraid, Grizel, that is a distinction, but not a difference."

"Yes, mother, I quite agree with you; it was a deception. Would you rather I had told the whole truth, and allowed my dear father to be taken? 'Kings hae lang hands;' and I would have told twenty lies, and twenty more, if I had been driven to

it, to save his life; for once in the clutches of the Council, nothing could save him. It was for this reason that I begged my father to tell you nothing, for I knew how much you would be pained and embarrassed by the questions likely to be put to you."

"O my dear child, I cannot blame you. I cannot, must not judge you. I fear even that I rejoice in having such a brave daughter."

"And you, mother dear, will have to be brave too, and keep the secret close. Jamie Winter and I contrived it all; and I am much afraid we, and you too, mother, will have to deceive and dissemble many times more before we can get my father clear away out of the country. The very first difficulty is how he is to be fed, for the servants believe him gone, and so do the bairns; so, perhaps the lies I spoke of just now may prove insufficient to meet the difficulties which must arise. Perhaps I had better begin by going to the buttery to see what I can secrete for my father's supper; our unexpected dinner party to-day will form an excuse for my visit of inspection. So you see, mother, I shall have to walk in crooked ways and dark, in more senses than one."

"How do you mean, Grizel?"

"Just this, mother. We—Lady Hume, with Mistress Grizel, her daughter, and Jamie Winter—

good, trusty Jamie—are banded together to cheat the Council of Edinburgh of their prey. We cannot do this openly; our ways must be dark and crooked, and even untruthful and secret. How can it be done else? To-night I shall have to go to my prisoner to take him food, and that will be a deed of darkness to begin with."

"You, Grizel—at night? Do you mean that? Cannot Jamie—"

"No," said Grizel firmly; "I am going every night while he has to hide there. No, I do not like it. I am a horrid coward at crossing the churchyard, and at night, too. But I am going to punish my cowardice, and grow brave if I can. I could not let Jamie go: he would be more likely to be frightened at bogles than I am; and he has not as much at stake, and might call out or do something that would betray us all."

"I never thought of such a thing, Grizel, till now that you speak of it."

"No, mother," said Grizel, laughing, and assuming a gaiety she did not feel; for Lady Hume looked grave and anxious. "But you would have thought of it when you missed his dear face from our supper board to-night.—Poor father! I shall have many a foraging expedition to make for you, and it is better that I go at once and begin."

As she closed the door behind her, Lady Hume sank into her chair once more, lost in wonder at her young daughter's courage and forethought.

"Truly," she thought, "the child is her father's own. She does not get these qualities from me."

CHAPTER III.

"'Tis now the very witching time of night,
When churchyards yawn."

REDBRAES CASTLE was dark; for all the domestics, men and women, were in bed and asleep, and only in Lady Hume's chamber a shaded light was burning, the jealously closed and curtained lattices effectually preventing a single ray from betraying that any one was watching in that room. The castle was dark, the night was dark, and the way was dark; and dark were the forebodings of poor Grizel as her mother's noiseless hand closed the heavy oaken door behind her. Nothing but the fact that her father's very existence depended upon her would have induced her to undertake such a fearsome expedition. More than two hundred years have rolled over since that time; and even now, with all the march of intellect and education, but few could be found who, under such circumstances and conditions, would step forth into the dark wilds of night without a qualm, a mysterious dread upon them, impossible

to define, but nevertheless a very present sense of impending peril.

The way was well known, as indeed all the ways about Redbraes were well known, to this country-bred though highly-born young girl. Her feet were familiar to rough and rocky paths, if paths they could be called; but to-night it seemed to her that loose stones and knotted roots beset her passage to the church in such a manner as to cause her many a stumble. The dark cloak in which she was wrapped caught on twigs and brambles, as though mischievous fingers twitched her back in her progress; and now and then the increasing darkness, caused by the overhanging branches of some tree, made her heart leap with terror, as if some gigantic form blocked her way. Still she fared bravely on, thankful that it was a cloudy, moonless night—not that it was likely that any one would be about at that time of night, but still fear creates a thousand possibilities, and, as she had laughingly told her mother, dark deeds must needs have dark ways.

The distance, too—how much farther it seemed than when walking in the light of day! It seemed to Grizel that she should never reach the end of her journey. At length she felt the little rising path that led by the minister's garden wall, and knew she was now near to Polwarth Church. Stepping eagerly

on, her foot dislodged a loosened stone, which went tumbling and bumping down the declivity with what to her overstrung nerves sounded like distant thunder. For a moment she stood listening as it bounded onwards, when suddenly the night was filled with hideous yells, as if the very fiends had broken loose upon her.

Poor frightened Grizel! The fiends were only the minister's dogs, who, roused from their comfortable slumbers by an unusual noise, were vying with each other which should howl the loudest. Grizel realized this immediately; but a new fear beset her—that the minister's household would be aroused by this unwonted disturbance—and she fled as fast as feet would carry her. How she reached her destination she hardly knew, till she felt her father's arms about her, and heard his soothing words in her ear.

"My brave little lassie, rest here." And he drew her to his knee, and laid her head upon his shoulder. "How thy heart beats, dear child! Lie still. I can wait for news, and supper too, till thou art calm."

They had much to say to each other as the night wore on; for Sir Patrick would not hear of her returning till daybreak, lest she should arouse the minister's dogs again. Grizel, on her part, had to tell him of the search which had taken place, and how it was supposed he had gone to Berwick; and Sir

Patrick told her how Jamie Winter had placed some old discarded cushions from the church above them, for him to lie upon, and had brought some blankets from his own cottage. Also he showed her how Jamie had contrived a wooden shutter to cover the narrow slit in the stone in the outer wall of the vault, so that he could burn a rushlight, a bundle of which useful but not too brilliant illuminators the faithful Jamie had likewise furnished him with.

"So thou seest, my bonnie woman, that thy father has some comforts even in this gruesome place; and he has the Good Book and Buchanan's Version of the Psalms to help him. But," he added, drawing in his breath with a quivering sigh, "I shall be glad when I may breathe the free air of heaven again. This place stifles me; and dead men, though they be one's own ancestors, are but ghastly companionship."

Grizel could not repress a shudder as she drew closer to her father's side. The feeble light of the rush candle was merciful, and she had no desire to probe the secrets of this prison-house.

Presently Sir Patrick looked at his watch, and rising, blew the candle out, and drew back the little wooden shutter.

"See," he said, "the first streaks of morning light are in the sky. Thou must away, my child. But go not past the minister's wall again. Thou must skirt

the little wood—that will lead thee lower down; and maybe thy mother can devise some plan to silence those curs. Now go, my Grizel, for the dawn grows apace, and I would thou wert safe at home."

Kissing her upturned face, he helped her through the aperture formed by the stone sliding in its grooves, and stood for a moment watching her retreating figure, and eagerly breathing the fresh, cool air of the early morning. Reluctantly closing up his prison wall, he threw himself on his cushions, and endeavoured to court the sleep he needed so much.

But Grizel's brain, as she hurried along on her way back to Redbraes, was busy in schemes to release her father from his dark and dismal lodging. She saw, indeed, only too clearly the risks of detection she ran in having thus to visit him nightly, and she dreaded the unhealthy influence on his mind and body should he have to remain in his narrow and "uncanny" hiding-place for long. So absorbed was she in her many plans for his relief that she was almost surprised when she came in sight of home. The distance which had seemed so appallingly long in the darkness of the night had been traversed with the rapidity of a dream.

Lady Hume had been watching for her with an anxious heart, hardly daring to think of what might happen to her. She too had heard the distant barking

and howling of the minister's dogs, and had already made up her mind what she would do to put a stop to it. She closed and bolted the massive door behind her devoted daughter, with a thankful heart that, so far at least, all was well. Then taking her by the hand, they ascended the winding stairs to their chambers.

"Tumble your bed, my child, as though you had slept in it, and come to my chamber. We must have a long talk."

And a long talk the mother and her favourite daughter had; the result of which was that Lady Hume set off in the forenoon to the minister's house, and Grizel sent for Jamie Winter.

Now there was on the ground floor of the castle a disused room. There was no hiding-place in it, not so much as a closet; but Lady Hume and Grizel had determined on a plan to make one, so that Sir Patrick could inhabit this room, and, in the unwelcome event of another search party visiting the castle, he could betake himself to this hiding-place. The plan which Grizel confided to Jamie was that they should scoop the earth out of the floor in a place in the room usually occupied by a bed, until it was a hole large and deep enough to hold a wooden box which Jamie was to make, in which Sir Patrick could lie. Holes were to be bored to allow sufficient air for breathing, and a bed placed in it.

In the absence of sufficient details, it is difficult to understand how such a device could have escaped detection had a second search been made, which happily does not seem to have occurred. That the floor of the chamber must have been an earthen one would seem to be a fact, since, to avoid any noise in making the excavation, Grizel and Jamie Winter removed the earth with their hands, in doing which the poor child's nails were worn to the quick. Had there been a boarded floor, a saw must have been used. But how it seemed possible to conceal a large wooden box in an earthen floor, and yet allow the perforated lid to admit air, is not clear to us to understand. But, as we said before, happily its security was not tested. But many days of hard labour had to go by before Sir Patrick could be removed to his own home.

During these days of hard work, Grizel continued her visits each night to the gloomy vault, taking to her beloved father his daily food and drink, and cheering by her presence his gloomy hours. The minister's dogs, poor beasts, barked and howled no longer. Lady Hume so worked upon the good man's fears of a mad dog about the countryside that he had them all destroyed. We are sure—though it is two hundred years ago—that we know Grizel Hume so well as to be certain that she was grieved to the heart to know how the poor dumb creatures, faithful

to their duty, were sacrificed; and doubtless Lady Hume was distressed for the necessity of such a thing.

What a difficult life to live must Grizel's have been! Secreting sufficient food for her father without incurring suspicion was no little matter. The boys were a merry lot of little rascals, fond of jokes and play, and they wondered much why Grizel, who dearly liked fun and frolic too, was so silent, so preoccupied. They little thought that while she made a show of eating her dinner, the greater part of the food was, in fact, conveyed to a dish hidden in her lap. One day when a sheep's head was on the table, she, knowing how much her father relished this dish, contrived, while the boys were engaged in some animated conversation, to turn the whole contents into her lap. When there came a lull in the boys' talk, they looked round in astonishment to find the dish empty.

"Mother," exclaimed Sandy, "will ye look to Grizel? While we ha' been supping our broth, she has eaten up the whole sheep's head!"

It is to be hoped there was some other substantial viand for the hungry boys, and for poor Grizel too, who, we fear, must have often gone short herself, that the basket she carried to her father might be a heavy one.

CHAPTER IV.

"Stone walls do not a prison make,
Nor iron bars a cage;
Minds, innocent and quiet, take
That for an hermitage."

AT last the basement room at Redbraes was made habitable for Sir Patrick, and in the dead of night he left his dismal abode, and was once more beneath his own roof. True, he was still a close prisoner; no one but his wife, Grizel, and Jamie Winter knew that the long-disused chamber was occupied. Grizel kept the key, and it was she who oftenest visited him. Still, sometimes Lady Hume managed to steal away from her household, and was locked in with her husband; for never by any chance did Grizel leave the door unfastened, or the key out of her own possession.

But Sir Patrick was contented—nay, more, he was happy. The lonely hours were passed in the company of his books, and the pleasure of knowing that those he loved were about him. Sometimes the merry voices of his young boys reached him,

and he would lay aside his reading to listen to their footsteps. During the time of this, in a measure, voluntary confinement, his constant reading of Buchanan's Version of the Psalms so impressed them on his memory that to the end of his life he could repeat any one of them that might be named. He might well have said with the poet,—

"My mind to me a kingdom is."

But there were times when the news, brought to him mostly through the medium of Winter, troubled him greatly, feeling as he did incapable of helping friends who were like himself fugitives from vengeance. Especially so was it when one evening Grizel came to her father to find him more depressed than she had before ever seen him. In the morning she had told him that Jamie Winter had learned that at last her father's old friend, Robert Baillie, would be brought to trial speedily, for that his health was so bad that the Council feared he would escape justice by dying. They but waited for the arrival of his son from Holland, where he had gone for his education, and then his examination would take place.

Her father was seated at his table, and Grizel saw he had been writing. A folded letter lay before him. Their eyes met, and he answered the question that shone in hers.

"Yes, my child, I have writ to my old friend, Robert Baillie of Jerviswood, words that must be conveyed to him in some fashion. It is the only chance to save his life. I know not that it will do so; still, I cannot rest unless the chance is given to him. Grizel, my dear daughter, how is it to be done?"

She did not answer, for she read in his face that he looked to her for help, and for the moment her heart failed her.

"'Tis hard to send thee forth on such an errand, and in the face of such difficulties as thou must encounter, for it must be delivered secretly. But I have none but thee I can trust."

"And if it is possible to be done, I will do it, father; but as yet I know not how."

"Nor do I, dear child. I cannot direct thee. But if thou canst get to Edinburgh safe, God will put the way into thy mind how to get the letter into poor Baillie's hands."

"I must not go as my father's daughter," said Grizel; "that would be more than suspicious. I should but bring down danger on thee."

Sir Patrick made a motion with his hand as if he would put the thought away from him.

"I have schemed and planned all day till I can think no more. I could better go myself than tell thee how to manage; and it would be best that I

did. It is cowardly to send thee to cope with brutal jailers at the Tolbooth. How shouldst thou know how to speak to them? How could I dream of sending thee, my young and lovely child? I have been mad to think of it."

"Thou would be mad indeed if thou could think for an instant of going thyself. No, father dear; I will take all risks. As you say, the way will be shown to me. But, for my mother's sake and the bairns, father, thou must be saved. We cannot lose thee."

He caught her to his breast. For the moment they changed places, for he was more overcome than she.

"When must I start, father dear?"

"To-morrow, as early as possible. It is some thirty miles, Grizel. Thou must ride at least as far as Dalkeith. Let Winter ride with thee. Thy mother's mare is in the stable. She is gentle and strong; she can carry thee and Winter well."

"Why, I might go as Jeannie Winter; she is just my height. The very thing, father. How clever of thee to think of that!"

Sir Patrick caught the infection of her smile, and smiled too.

"Nay," he said, "I had not carried out the thought so far; it was thy clever head that completed it."

Jamie Winter was again summoned to the family

council, and it was arranged that he should bring a suit of his daughter's clothing—a winsey skirt, a loose cotton bedgown sort of garment that fastened at the throat and was tied round the waist with a draw-string, and a voluminous plaid that formed a hood as well as a wrap for the body. A pair of thick shoes fastened with clasps, and blue stockings, completed Grizel's outfit; and in case of meeting any acquaintance of either young lady on the road, Jeannie Winter was told to keep out of sight for a couple of days—indeed, until Mistress Grizel returned. Doubtless Jeannie wondered why her dress was wanted for the young lady at the castle; but her mother, who was not quite in the dark as to how matters stood, satisfied her with some tale, and the girl was easy-going and unsuspicious.

The ride to Dalkeith was accomplished without adventures of any kind. At Dalkeith, Winter and Grizel parted—he to await her return, and rest his horse, and secure a lodging for the night for his young charge, should it be necessary. Grizel, after some slight refreshment, with which they had come provided, and which they shared in simple fashion under a tree a little removed from the road, continued her journey on foot. It was nothing more than a good walk of some five or six miles, of which she thought nothing.

"Jamie," she whispered, as she rose to her feet to pursue her journey, "I cannot say how long I may be. There will be three hours' walking, there and back. I may not be here again this night, but you'll wait for me, Jamie; and if I do not come early in the morn, you'll come and seek me, will you not? Ask for 'Jeannie'—only 'Jeannie,' mind—at the Tolbooth; and if I am there—shut up—at least you can tell my mother where I am. You'll do this for me, Jamie?"

"I'll do this, Mistress Grizel, an' mair, for your father's daughter. It's but sma' means I hae to help in the gude cause; but ane can dee but ainee, an' I'll gie my life to tak ye safe hame again."

"Good Jamie!" said Grizel, grasping his hard hand. "Do I not know it well, true friend as thou art? Farewell, for a time at least."

And with tears in her eyes Grizel turned away, and commenced her walk into Edinburgh town.

The distance was not great, and, with her brain busy with expedients, she very soon found herself in the thronging streets. She felt oddly uncomfortable in her countrified garments, but soon got reconciled to them as from time to time she met her counterpart in the person of some lassie as bonnie as herself, and noticed that no one looked curiously at them. Her heart did sink within her

at the sight of the grim prison, the Tolbooth, when she stood before its awful door. Though Jamie had directed her steps, and described the place to her, she was for a moment fearful of her undertaking. Then taking her courage in both hands, she boldly knocked.

A small wicket or grating was opened, and a gruff voice demanded her business. Grizel could see only a part of a face—which, to say the least, wore no prepossessing expression—and a pair of hard-looking eyes; but she answered simply,—

"I canna tell my business to the lugs o' a steel-knobbit yett wi' juist a slit in't nae muckle bigger than a lang rush can'le. Gin yer fain to ken it, ye maun mak shift to open an' let me in."

The man grumbled something that did not reach Grizel's ears; but he unbarred and unbolted the massive iron-studded door, and she quickly stepped inside.

"Now, mistress, what may you want here, in the Tolbooth of Edinburgh? Folks are not generally so keen to come inside these gates. Speak! What do you want here?"

"The laird," said Grizel, dropping a little rustic curtsy.

"The laird?" echoed the man. "What laird do you mean?"

"Juist the laird," said Grizel simply; "a'body kens the laird."

"Silly lassie! What is the laird's name?"

"A'body kens the laird o' Jerviswood," she answered, with a little scornful laugh.

"Robert Baillie mean ye?" said the man.

"Ay, juist the laird, Baillie o' Jerviswood."

As she spoke the name, the figure of a young man was dimly seen descending the narrow stairs into the guardroom where they stood. He paused with his foot on the last step as the talk went on.

"And who are you, to come here asking for the laird o' Jerviswood?"

"I? Oh, I'm juist Jeannie."

"Jeannie what?" said the man roughly.

"Nay, juist Jeannie; I amna Watt at a'."

"You have not told me your business with him. Is it likely that I'm going to let the likes o' you up to see him without knowing your business?"

"It's juist my ain business, an' the laird's," said Grizel quietly. "It is naething o' yours at a'."

"Go your ways at once," said the man sharply, opening the door for her to pass out.

"Nay," said Grizel; "sin' ye winna let me see him, ye maun tak the word yoursel. Juist say it's Jeannie wad speak wi' him."

"Go your ways before I put you out," returned

the man, his temper evidently getting the better of him. "I don't want to be rough, but I've had enough of your bold-faced impudence. Go, or—"

"But I maun speak wi' him," she persisted, more earnestly. "The laird wad be sair grievit gin he kenned I'd been denied. What for d'ye say me nay? What harm think ye a bit lassie like me can dae the laird?"

"Who are you? Can't you speak plain? Are you his daughter?" said the man roughly.

"Nay," answered Grizel; "ye can see I'm no that, yoursel."

"His servant, then?"

"They're a' his servants wha kens the laird." And she dropped another little curtsy.

"Hang the baggage!" said the jailer savagely. "Can't you answer a plain question? Let's see the face you keep so well hid under the plaid; let's see what this 'Jeannie,' who comes so boldly seeking speech with her betters, is like, that I may know the hussy again." And the man laid a rude hand on Grizel's shoulder, and would with the other have torn her plaid from her head, if she had not clutched it tightly under her chin.

"Take your unmannerly grasp from the lass!" said a stern voice at the man's elbow. "How dare you lay hands on a woman? Take care that I do

not report you. If 'tis against rules to admit a visitor to the prison, say so civilly, and let her go."

But a new terror had seized Grizel. Something in the commanding tones of the voice of her protector reminded her of the officer who had led the search party at Redbraes; and without daring to glance at the speaker, she fled out of the open door into the street, and pulling her plaid still closer over her face to hide the tears of disappointment and fright that filled her eyes and ran down her crimsoned cheeks, she hurried on, she knew not where, for her brain was in a whirl of confusion. What if it were the very man who had come to the castle? Oh, what a narrow escape of discovery she had had! Then, too, she had failed, and her tears rained down anew at the thought.

"Oh, poor father! How sorry he will be, and how badly have I played my part!"

To gain composure and to avoid the numbers of people who, in her excited condition, seemed to beset her, she turned into a narrow lane or wynd, of which there were so many in Old Edinburgh, and slackening the rapid pace she had maintained, drew her handkerchief from her pocket to wipe her tears away. A footstep as hurried as her own at that moment entered the wynd, and a voice called in a subdued tone, "Jeannie."

Turning, all alarmed as to what new turn affairs were taking, she confronted a young gentleman of about her own age, and looking, as she thought, like a foreigner.

"I have had a race to catch you," he said, looking at her curiously. "Do not tremble so, I beg. There is no one here to harm you. Let me explain. I was in the guardroom at the prison yonder, and heard your name as you were begging speech with my father."

"Your father!" cried Grizel in astonishment.

"Yes; I am Robert Baillie, eldest son of him you wanted but now to speak with. Can I take any message to him for you, Jeannie?"

"Is it true? Are you really the son of Robert Baillie o' Jerviswood? And was it you who saved me from that dreadful man?" cried Grizel, in joyful amazement. "This is no trick to entrap me to tell my business with him?"

"Trick; no. I came over from Holland to be with my poor unfortunate father at his trial, and only landed yesterday."

Grizel clasped her hands in involuntary thankfulness as she murmured,—

"Then I have been shown the way, as I prayed I might be. Mr. Baillie, I have a letter for your father from my father, who charged me to deliver it with

my own hand. How I failed to do so you heard. I will give it to you for him thankfully." And Grizel drew forth the letter from her bosom, and held it out to the young man.

He took it in amazement. "I do not understand," he said. "But now you were a simple country lass, with not—pray, pardon me—too much wit about you. Your father, you say—"

"Is Sir Patrick Hume," returned Grizel in a low whisper, "and save that he is not in prison, he is in as great danger as your father."

"Then you are Miss Jeannie Hume?" said Robert Baillie, still, it would appear, in some bewilderment.

"No," she replied, with a vivid blush, "I am Grizel Hume; but I could not come here in my own character. My name would have been enough to cause inquiries. It was only a few weeks ago our home was searched by a party of soldiers sent to seize my father."

"And he?" inquired the young man eagerly.

"Escaped detection," said Grizel. "I pray you do not ask how. But that letter—I do not know its contents—my father said that it was of the utmost importance that Mr. Baillie had it before his trial. Destroy it, I beg of you, when he has read it, for my father's life hangs in the balance."

"Have no fear on that point. You may trust me

to be careful in aught that concerns you. It distresses me to see you still so agitated. What can I do for you? Where were you going when I overtook you?"

"I do not know. I was so—so mad that I had not fulfilled my errand that I did not look or heed anything," said Grizel, the tears again rising in her eyes.

"Tell me all, everything, so that I may help you," said Robert earnestly. "You may trust me, indeed you may—Grizel—if I may call you so."

She looked up with a smile, her eyes full of gratitude, and simply gave him her hand in token of her trust.

"If you will show me the road I must take to return to Dalkeith, where I have a horse and a faithful old servant waiting for me, I shall be very thankful."

"I will go with you so far. Nay, do not refuse me the happiness of seeing you in safe keeping. You are not fit to thread your way through these byways by yourself. Come, I will lead the way till we gain the open road; and we will avoid the Tolbooth like the pestilence. I must not be seen with you, for all sakes."

Not another word was spoken between them till the free, fresh air of the country surrounding Edinburgh was reached. There, under this new influence,

Grizel told her simple story to her friend, for such she felt him to be. Nay, more. There were strange and wonderful emotions in her heart, which shed a new bloom to her cheek, and gave a light to her eyes, which Robert on his part seemed to find irresistibly charming; and when he unwillingly gave her up to Jamie Winter's care, it was with the parting promise of writing to her, to tell her how his father fared at the dreaded trial.

"Let the news come through Jamie Winter, then," said Grizel, as he pressed her hand, "for ours is a suspected house, and I fear lest my father might be compromised."

"So be it," said Robert, as he lifted her light form on to the pillion, and saw her ride away. Then he turned and went back to his duties, which, sad and foreboding as they were, seemed to have received a benediction on them.

CHAPTER V.

"In a drear-nighted December."

TIME passed heavily at Redbraes Castle after Grizel's journey to Edinburgh. The same watchful care lest the presence of Sir Patrick Hume in his own home should be discovered, or even suspected, was anxiously maintained by his devoted wife and daughter. At times Jamie Winter went to Edinburgh, and at all times he kept the family well informed of such news as came to his knowledge, which was grim, ghastly, and disquieting enough. Once or twice Robert Baillie wrote to Grizel, and though these letters were written in a strictly friendly tone, and gave but sad accounts of his father's failing health and weariness of his long imprisonment, they were to her an assurance that he had no more forgotten their singular meeting than she had.

The summer faded into autumn, and autumn's lovely tints died out in the shortened days of November. Still the weary incarceration of Robert

Baillie of Jerviswood continued, till, just on the eve of that day of days when angel voices proclaimed "good tidings of great joy," "on earth peace, good will toward men," the Council brought the suffering man to trial; and lest he should die before their vengeance could be satisfied, he was executed on the same day—December 24, 1684. Possibly his life might have been spared if he would have betrayed his confederates; but he refused, saying, "They who can make such a proposal know neither me nor my country."

So perished Robert Baillie of Jerviswood, the first of many Scottish victims sent from London by Jeffreys to be dealt with by their own countrymen. That infamous judge did not err on the side of mercy in doing so.

Terror hung over the castle of Redbraes like the darkness which betokens the coming tempest. Nothing but flight, and that speedy, could serve Sir Patrick now; and some days before Robert's broken-hearted letter arrived for Grizel, telling in a few pathetic words his father's fate, he was on his way to London, where he hoped to lie hidden till he could make his way to the coast and cross to Holland. What disguise he assumed we are not told; but no doubt Lady Hume and her daughter had not been idle during the few months which he had passed in comparative secu-

rity under his own roof. Many other gentlemen and noblemen escaped to Holland at this time, where they were received and welcomed by the Prince of Orange, to whom so many in the kingdom looked for deliverance.

Robert, too, had gone; it was his only course to secure his liberty. Innocence of all plots, or ignorance of their very existence, was no safeguard to any one in these times; and he had wisely departed while he could do so. Grizel knew this from his last letter, and she knew, too, that he loved her, though in words he had not said it.

Suspense in times of trouble is bad to bear patiently; it steals colour from lips and cheeks, and banishes sleep from weary eyes. Yet this was Lady Hume's and her daughter's portion for long weeks after Sir Patrick's departure. Had he reached London in safety? Had he been successful in finding means to leave England? These wearisome mental questionings, and the perpetual dread of bad news, bid fair to break down the strongest hearts.

So the days of 1685 lengthen, and one month follows another, till in June the monotony of suspense is suddenly ended by the tidings that the Earl of Argyle is in arms in Argyleshire, and that Sir Patrick Hume and Sir John Cochrane are his two seconds in command. What must have been the feelings

of Lady Hume and her daughters, and her growing sons, old enough by another year to understand the deadly peril that beset their father? But this attempt to set aside the authority of James the Second (who, in spite of a growing opposition, had ascended the throne of England on the death of Charles in February), futile as it was perilous, was soon at an end—the earl's followers killed, or dispersed and flying for their lives; Argyle himself a prisoner, soon to pay for his rebellion with his head; Sir John Cochrane a prisoner too, but more happily fated to be saved by the heroism of his daughter (herself another "Grizel"); and Sir Patrick Hume, his estates confiscated, beggared beyond repair, once more away to his refuge across the sea.

Thither, as soon as it was manageable, the unfortunate family followed him—all but the delicate little daughter Juliana, who was too weakly to be exposed to the dangers and difficulties of a voyage; for crossing our turbulent northern seas, in such vessels as were available more than two hundred years ago, was a very different matter from what it is at the present day. It was with extreme reluctance that Lady Hume parted with the child; but she knew that Jamie Winter and his wife would do their utmost for her comfort, and, indeed, the separation was unavoidable. So with much sorrowful leave-

taking of their faithful servants and tenants, and their many friends and well-wishers, they took their departure, and after a long and trying journey arrived at their destination, Utrecht, where Sir Patrick had secured a small house to receive them, and where at last, in spite of privations, they tasted the happiness of security.

But Grizel Hume's trials were not over yet. In a few months it was found necessary that Juliana should be restored to her parents; and it was again her sister Grizel, whose task it was to fetch the child, who had to undertake the journey. Their circumstances, too, were terribly straitened, and she was commissioned to gather up whatever money was due to Sir Patrick, besides other business matters intrusted to her. Surely the faith and confidence reposed in this daughter were unbounded; one would not like to suggest there was wanting a proper consideration for her youth and inexperience.

But she bravely undertook the duties imposed upon her, and, what is more, accomplished them too. But at what cost? We presume that the time of year must have been late, for the voyage back was a fearful one. A tremendous storm threatened shipwreck, and the brutal and inhuman behaviour of the master of the vessel added to the terror of the two poor defenceless girls. They were landed at last—how

thankfully who can tell ?—at Brielle, in the island of Voorne, situated at the mouth of the river Meuse, and that same night started for Rotterdam. A glance at the map shows that that town is on the mainland, and that the river would have to be crossed to reach it, and that the distance must be considerable. Yet these brave girls did not hesitate, and accompanied by a Scottish gentleman, a refugee like themselves, whom they accidentally met on their road, they set out to walk to Rotterdam.

It was a wretched night, cold and wet, the roads in a fearful state of mud, and poor little Juliana soon lost her shoes in it, and no groping for them was of any avail. So Grizel took the wailing child on her back, while their *sympathizing* companion carried their scanty baggage. We wonder if it would not have been a better sort of sympathy on his part had they exchanged burdens.

But the longest journey comes to an end at last—

"The day drags through, though storms keep out the sun"—

and Grizel reached Utrecht and her father's house in safety. Sorely tired and weary she must have been; but once safe at home with those she loved so devotedly, she was the first to laugh at and make light of such distresses as might have overcome a strong man.

CHAPTER VI.

"I brew, I bake, I mend, I make,
With little thanks for all."

OF Grizel's life in Utrecht for the next three and a half years we will try to give a peep, as in some magic mirror where shadowy figures move and for a space have life given to them.

We see her up betimes in her simple Dutch dress, which she has assumed so that in her numerous avocations she may attract no particular notice, lighting the fire in her father's study when the weather is too cold for him to sit without. Presently she is in her small kitchen, where everything is scrupulously neat and clean; and she is warming some "small beer" for her father. It is six o'clock, but as yet no other person is astir in the house. It is even her duty to awaken her father when his beer is warm. This done, she rouses the sleepy boys and girls, and having got breakfast for the whole family, she sends the children in to her father, who every day teaches them according to their age and capacity. Grizel would

fain join them, that she too might gain a little more instruction in the Dutch and French languages; but it is only now and then she can spare a moment to do so, being always interrupted for some household duty.

Later on, the quiet, graceful figure of the young girl may be seen in the market, where, with such Dutch as she can command, she makes her daily bargains, frugally eking out her scanty amount of coin to the best of her ability. When this is done, and her purchases are made, she goes to the nearest mill to get the corn ground, so that she can make and bake the bread for the family, and even more than the family; for many poor refugees are here besides themselves, and there are often three, four, or five of them to share their meal.

There is no servant to help Grizel, only a girl comes in to wash the clothes—the only thing Sir Patrick Hume's eldest daughter does not do. But all the "dressing" of the linen, as it was called, falls to her share, besides the cleaning of the house, the cooking of meals, the mending of children's stockings and other clothes; for, excepting that Lady Hume helps to educate her younger children, she does not appear to take any part in the household cares.

Does Grizel never think her lot an unnecessarily hard one—that Christina is but a few years her junior,

and that even the boys might help her sometimes? No, apparently not. She accepts her position without one grudging thought. But surely sometimes, when she is patiently working in her kitchen, she will pause to listen to the sound of her sister's voice as she sings the dear old songs of Scotland to the accompaniment of the harpsichord her father has bought cheap, he and his wife being so fond of music. Grizel can play and sing too; but she sings her songs while she works, for she has no time for the harpsichord. Thank God she has a voiceless song in her heart at all times, for Robert loves her dearly, and has told her so; and what is hard work or privation when the heart sings always?

We will take yet another peep in our magic mirror. It is night, and all the family are in bed, tucked up warm under those feather coverlids that defy Jack Frost. But Grizel is in her kitchen, where the great old Dutch clock ticks lazily on, and presently strikes, just as lazily, twelve. It is surely time for those sweet eyes to close, and that rich chestnut hair to be loosened, and those busy hands to rest. But no: Grizel is not yet ready for bed; she has a long night's work to do. Her eldest brother Patrick has gone into the guards of the Prince of Orange, along with Robert, until a position in the army is found for them; and it is her pride that her brother should

in no way be shamed by his dress. To keep him dressed for his position as he ought to be was a great strain upon the family resources, and Grizel's constant care was to have his linen in spotless perfection. There were little point cravats and cuffs which no hired wash-girl could be trusted to touch with her clumsy fingers, scarcely even to look at; and Grizel is now engrossed in getting up these delicate morsels of a young gentleman's dress. The big old Dutch clock, with a long husky rattle, strikes one, and Grizel renews her fire in the small stove, so that the heaters may be ready, while she sits patiently picking out every tiny turn and twist in the exquisite lace with dainty care, lest a thread should be broken. One by one she lays them aside till all are ready for the pressing; and as she finishes the last one, the old clock, with another ghostly rattle, lazily strikes two.

She looks with pleasure at the little pile of cravats and cuffs, and reaches her hand for other articles for her irons. Surely she will not go through that pile of linen to-night! Is it not time to rest? But the old clock ticks on, and Grizel still is at her board when, with what seems a longer and harsher warning than ever, it strikes six; and it is time to warm her father's small beer, and arouse the household, and begin her work for the day.

But this is exceptional, surely? No, it is no

exception. Many a night does Grizel pass in such labour, simply because only by such means can she accomplish the many duties that devolve upon her. Is it not well that her heart should sing while she works?

They are miserably poor; it is hard to understand how they find even the bare necessaries of life. The small quantity of plate, and perhaps a few other articles of value, have gone piece by piece to the pawnbroker's. Yet when they left Utrecht they managed to redeem these, and take them all back with them, and no debt was left unpaid.

So poor they were that one night the bell which announced the coming of the man who collected money for the poor by going from house to house—a custom in Utrecht at that time—struck a kind of panic in their hearts. Search among the pockets of the assembled family produced one "orkey," the smallest coin then used in Holland. No one, not even the youngest child, had courage to tender such a contribution, when Sir Patrick himself rose from his seat, saying, "We can give no more than all we have," and took the coin to the door.

It was at least a quiet life; but the world was busy outside the little house of refuge in Utrecht. Even there Rumour, with her hundred tongues, made herself busy; and they heard of messengers that went and

came between Holland and England, and much excitement and discontent was talked of as existing in the latter country. Sir Patrick was restless, and, but for his wife and children, would have again plunged into the strife. But by-and-by the Prince of Orange himself sent for him and other noblemen and gentlemen who were eager for the cause; and there were many conferences with him, in which Sir Patrick found much favour with the Prince for his wise counsel. This involved much travelling backwards and forwards. There must have been funds found for these journeys, for the distance between the Hague and Utrecht was too far to walk, and Sir Patrick had not his beautiful Sidney now. Perhaps the Prince was purse-bearer to him and to his many followers who flocked to his court, and whose numbers increased every day, until in 1688 his army counted some fourteen thousand, among whom were many Englishmen, who had either fled their country or been banished from it. The rest were Scots and Dutch.

It was with very mingled feelings that Lady Hume and her daughters accompanied Sir Patrick to Helvoetsluys, where the Prince's fleet lay at anchor. Much was at stake—much to fear, much to hope for. Should the enterprise succeed, and the tyrant James be driven from his throne, how many of his

subjects, now suffering all the pains of poverty, would be restored to their possessions! On the other hand, should the attempt fail, how calamitous would be such a failure! It would be death, despair, and ruin. The odds were desperate. Lady Hume could not face the question; and Grizel, with the love-light in her beautiful eyes, looked proudly on, as, from among the thousands assembled, she marked her lover and her brother passing in review before the Prince, who stood surrounded by his officers, among whom her father was conspicuous. The embarkation of the troops was a gallant show. No wonder that the girl's heart swelled with exultation, for Robert was a firm believer in his leader's power, and Grizel had caught Robert's enthusiasm, and would hearken to neither doubt nor fear.

"Nay, love," she had said when Robert was taking a rather doleful leave of her; "we will not say 'farewell,' though methinks 'tis a good word, and implies a happy ending. 'Tis the best word after all; for how can one fare well and yet be unhappy? So farewell it shall be, dear heart. Soon we shall meet again."

"And then?" asked Robert softly.

"Ay," answered Grizel, as she suffered him to draw her to his heart; "it may be when his highness has settled all the weighty matters he carries under that

big hat and feathers he wears, and has made himself king of England. Oh, thou need not hush me. I have heard whispers that spell 'king.'"

"But thou hast not answered me yet, Grizel."

"Well, then, if thou and I have a bit o' siller in our now empty pockets, 'tis possible we might try to make a little kingdom for ourselves."

"And shall I be king?" he asked fondly.

"No," she laughed. "Love shall be king and lord of all."

And so they had parted.

CHAPTER VII.

"Journeys end in lovers meeting."

EVERYBODY now knows what was the purpose of the Prince's fleet as it sailed away from Helvoetsluys; but at the time, with the exception of the Prince of Orange himself and a few of his closest and chosen friends, all were in ignorance of their destination. For twelve hours the fleet—of some seven hundred sail—bore northwards, in order to mislead the English vessels which had been cruising about as spies on William's movements for months. Then when they set sail towards Dover, to carry the news of the Prince's departure north, the great fleet tacked about and followed.

But, except incidentally, and as they relate to the fortunes of the Hume family, the doings of the Prince of Orange form no part of this story. Are they not written large in history, for all to read who choose?

To Sir Patrick this change in his life was a welcome one; for though he had bravely borne the

penury entailed by his banishment, the inactivity and powerlessness of his existence fretted and wore him. But his departure with the Prince left his family in the same condition, but without his presence and the excitement which for some time previous had acted as a strong tonic on their spirits. There was nothing now to do but to wait. News, despite the time it took to travel in those days, was not proportionately reliable. Sometimes it filled them with apprehension, and for days the little house at Utrecht lay under a cloud; and even Grizel's brave and hopeful spirit was cowed, and her step would lose its lightness. Then would come better tidings, brave tidings, that repaid all they had suffered. More than two months passed in this incertitude; but at length, early in February 1689, official news arrived that William had been chosen, or elected, by a majority in the House of Lords, King of England.

Now all was bustle and delighted preparation; for the Princess Mary of Orange, now Queen of England, had signified her pleasure that Lady Hume and Grizel should travel with her. The younger children were sent, in the care of friends (like the Humes, no doubt re-established in their possessions), to their dear old home at Redbraes, now again their very own; while Grizel and her mother prepared to attend the Queen. What a contrast that journey was to Grizel's last and

perilous voyage across the North Sea, when she fetched and brought back with her to Holland the poor, weakly Juliana, alone, unattended and unprotected, in rough and tempestuous weather, and with a ship-master whose brutalities shocked and terrified them! Now they were travelling with a princess—really already a queen—with all the luxuries and comforts possible provided for the voyage. Mary was so pleased with the sweet, unaffected simplicity of Grizel that she wished much to retain her services as one of her maids of honour; but Grizel loved her own people and her own fair land of Scotland too well to listen to the proposal. It was no temptation to her; her only difficulty lay in declining the honour in such words as would not in any way hurt the feelings of her royal mistress. Doubtless she did this in her own sweet way, which left no sting behind; and Grizel and Lady Hume returned to their own beloved home with thankful hearts.

There, too, they rejoined Sir Patrick, now Lord Polwarth, and invested with the chief state office of Scotland, as Lord Chancellor. In truth he had done good service to King William's cause in gaining him the support of many of the Whig lords in that country, and the king was one who did not forget his friends.

Two years after this revolution, Robert Baillie, who had been reinstated in all his father's possessions,

married his first love, Grizel Hume. Honours were bestowed upon him in the shape of more than one valuable appointment; and in 1697 his bonnie wife became Lady Grizel Baillie, her father, whom she had served with such heroic devotion, having been created Earl of Marchmont.

She had two daughters, Grizel and Rachel, both of whom married well, and according to their station. Let us look at their mother, not as in a magic mirror, but through the loving and admiring eyes of her daughter Grizel, who became Lady Murray of Stanhope. Her height, had Robert Baillie been asked to tell, might have been described in Shakespeare's words,—

"Just as high as my heart."

But, in more prosaic style, she was of middle stature, "very handsome, with a life and sweetness in her eyes very uncommon, and great delicacy in all her features. Her hair was chestnut, and to her last she had the finest complexion, and the clearest red in her cheeks and lips that could be seen in one of fifteen .....I have a book of songs of her writing when she was there [in Holland], some of them interrupted, half writ, some broke off in the middle of a sentence."

Notwithstanding the brilliant society in which she found herself after her marriage, and the elevation of her father to the rank of Earl of Marchmont, she

retained the old sweet simplicity of character which had always been a special charm. Happy in her husband, who was in every way worthy of her and of his name, happy in her children, whose love and admiration of her tell how entirely worthy she was of such love, she lived to an old age. Nor did she lack all

> "That should accompany old age,
> As honour, love, obedience, troops of friends."

Her cheerful nature speaks out in a line of one of her simple Scottish ballads, with which line we will conclude this story of Lady Grizel Baillie,—

> "An' werena my heart licht, I wad dee."

THE
STORY OF GRIZEL COCHRANE.

THE STORY OF GRIZEL COCHRANE.

1684.

CHAPTER I.

"Oft expectation fails, and most oft there
Where most it promises; and oft it hits
Where hope is coldest and despair most sits."
All's Well that Ends Well.

A BIG bare room in a big bare house, two bare-legged boys in Highland kilts, with a big bag of marbles.

"Now, Rob, I'm older than you, and it's my turn to dip first, besides."

"Well, then, dip. Black's the Duke of Monmouth, and gray's King James the Second. Now then—hooray! You're the king, and I'm the duke. Look out, your majesty! Have a care of your crown when I come into the field!"

Then the two lads, Rob and Jamie Cochrane, set to work to place their men, as they called their marbles, ranging them on the floor at the opposite sides of the room in the order of a miniature army—

Jamie in the meantime seemingly inclined to resent the decree which had made him King of England.

"You're never satisfied!" said Rob, as with rapid fingers he disposed of his marbles in long lines. "One would think you might be. You're seated firmly on the throne, while I'm obliged to hide about anywhere. Now then, are you ready? I'm going to fire."

And fire he did with such effect that he displaced some twenty or thirty of Jamie's closely-ranged men, setting them rolling in all directions. To the right of each army a portion of the floor had been chalked off, and all marbles passing this line were captive to the enemy.

"Prisoners!" shouted Rob, dashing across the room and gathering up his spoils, and away again to follow up his advantage before his slower brother had repaired the breach made in his lines.

The combat became fast and furious; the noise of the marbles as they rolled and rattled on the smooth boards, with the shouts and cries of the boys as a well-directed shot made havoc in his antagonist's ranks, was deafening. So engrossed were they that neither heard the door open, nor noticed that their sister had entered, and stood silently watching them.

"A Monmouth! a Monmouth!" shouted Rob at the top of his shrill voice. 'Confess, Jamie, you're

beaten. I've taken nearly all you're men; you've hardly one left to fire with."

But Jamie would not confess he was beaten, and from fighting with marbles it got to a fight of words, and might have come to a personal trial of their strength, but that Grizel interposed.

"Foolish laddies!" she exclaimed, coming forward, and laying a hand on each boy's shoulder. "There's strife enough in the world without your fighting over a bag of marbles. Which side do you suppose has won?"

"Monmouth!" returned Rob stoutly.

"Well, then, listen to me," said his sister gravely. "The Duke of Monmouth hasn't won, nor is he like to win while he leaves others to fight the battles he ought to fight himself. We have come to Scotland—our father and Sir Patrick Hume and the rest—on a fool's errand. The duke you are so proud to personate stays safely behind in Holland, while the gallant gentlemen who have bound themselves to his cause may perish without his raising a finger."

"Why, Grizel," exclaimed Jamie, looking into her earnest face, "there are tears in your eyes. What has happened?"

"The worst has happened, my poor boy, for us. Our father is a prisoner."

The two boys raised a cry of distress. Rob, with

his boyish brows knitted into one black line, vowed his revenge; while Jamie, ever cooler than his brother, asked how the cruel mishap had come about.

"Treachery, Jamie!" answered Grizel shortly. "There has been a fight. Our father met the king's troops at Muirdykes, and though the leader, Captain Clellan, was killed, their numbers so far exceeded ours that we were worsted, and father dismissed his men—every man to save himself—while he took refuge in his uncle's house. Ah, Jamie, do you not see? Uncle Gavin's wife is Captain Clellan's sister, and she betrayed him; and he is now in the Tolbooth."

The boys were silent now, while both instinctively looked into their sister's agitated face for the hope they trusted to find there.

"Ah, dear Grizel," cried Jamie, putting his arm about her neck, "what hope is there?"

"None, boy, none! He has been taken red-handed, fighting against King James. What mercy can we expect in such a case?"

"But there's grandfather!" exclaimed Rob. "He is an earl—King Charles made him Earl of Dundonald—he will make the people give him up."

"Silly little one," said Grizel sadly, stroking Rob's shining curls. "King James is not King Charles."

"Still, Grizel," said Jamie appealingly, "grandfather might try to save our father."

And so "grandfather" did try, but it was all of no use. As Grizel had foreseen, Sir John Cochrane was tried, and found guilty of conspiring against the king's majesty, and condemned to death.

"My children," he wrote to them from his gloomy prison, "I beseech you, for the last few days I have to live, to leave me to myself. I can bear to look on death, but I cannot bear to see your grief, and to know that I have brought you to this pass. Besides, young as you are, it might be supposed you were in some way implicated in the plot, which has failed so miserably, did you come to see your unhappy father. Farewell! Receive my blessing. Put not your faith in princes; trust only in God, and remember me in your prayers.—COCHRANE."

"No hope!" Are there any other two words in all our language which contain so much misery in so small a space? At the time this letter came to them, Grizel, with her two brothers, were at the castle of the Earl of Dundonald, who had taken the forlorn children under his protection.

"Grandfather," cried Rob, "why do you not call all your men and servants together, and go down and break the prison doors? If I were a belted earl like you, I would not stay at home and weep like a woman. I would—"

"Hush, little fool!" exclaimed the old man sternly.

"Listen. There are other ways of breaking jails than by force of blows. My arm is old now, and cannot do much in that line; and thy father's cause would but suffer the more did I openly side with rebellion. I am a loyal subject of King James, and will not end my days in conspiring against him. But, as I said, there are other ways.—Grizel, my child, are you listening?"

"Ay, grandfather," she answered, raising her sad eyes to his aged face.

"There are more keys than iron ones for opening prison doors," returned the old earl, with a little chuckle. "Have you never heard of gold, my girl? Cheer up, cheer up! I have this day sent off by a true and tried messenger no less a sum than five thousand pounds to King James. Father Petre—I can count upon him—is my very good friend, and the Catholics are sadly in want of money. Trust me, the gold will find the way to the king's heart when all other arguments fail."

Grizel started to her feet, her eyes shining with excitement.

"Oh, if I dared to hope!" she exclaimed fervently.

"You may, child, you may. King James has his family's greed for wealth. In the sight of so much good coin he could not say nay."

"And when—when, dear grandfather, shall we

hear, when shall we know? Oh, how dreadful to wait, and after all—" Grizel broke down, weeping.

The old nobleman's face fell; he knew on what a thousand chances his son's life hung. But he would not betray his fears. "We must have patience, child." And he smoothed her soft hair with trembling fingers. "The time of year is favourable; the roads are good. If all goes well, my messenger will reach London in seven or eight days, and in as many more he can return. Courage! Tears will not save him, Grizel."

Sixteen or seventeen days! No railroads then, no telegraph to flash the news from end to end of the kingdom. As the Earl of Dundonald said, there was nothing but patience to help poor Grizel, nothing but to fold her hands and wait. But while she waited the order for her father's execution might arrive! This was the thought that haunted her. His pardon might be won, but what if it came too late?

Darkness fell on the saddened household of the old earl, but Grizel never slept; throughout the night she paced her room, or sat with tightly clasped hands, thinking, thinking, till her brain began to burn. But when morning came, and all the summer birds broke into a chorus of rejoicing and praise, she had come to a determination to try to save her beloved father; and sinking on her knees, she prayed for strength to be given to her to carry out her plan.

Next morning she had a long and private conversation with her grandfather in his bedroom before he rose. Rob saw her as she came forth, her eyes bright and shining, though wet with tears. He sprang to her side.

"Why, Grizel, there is a smile on your lips; you look as if you had seen an angel."

"Perhaps I have, Rob. I almost feel as if I have, dear boy," she answered, kissing him as she spoke. "I am going to see our father. No, Robbie, no," she went on, replying to the lad's appealing eyes; "I must go alone. To go at all is contrary to his command. But I will tell you what you and Jamie can do for me while I am gone. See that gray Juniper's harness is all complete, and Juniper himself in good order. I am going to ride as far as old Nurse Cameron's house at Berwick, and want him to do his best."

"By yourself, Grizel?" asked Jamie, who had now joined them.

"By myself," she answered, looking straight into the elder boy's eyes. "And I trust to you two lads to keep my absence secret, and ask no questions."

For answer, the two brave boys thrust out their hands to clasp hers, and for a moment there was silence. "And what if Andrew Ker should come? What are we to tell him, Grizel?" asked Jamie, with a smile.

"Just what you can, Jamie," she replied, with another smile and a blush. "Not even Andrew must know where I'm gone. Stay! Let him think I have gained permission to stop with my father. God will forgive us for the lie; He knows my heart, and will be merciful."

So, at midday, when Sir John Cochrane was seated in his gloomy prison chamber, the door opened, and his fair young daughter entered, and the door was closed and fastened behind her. Supposing it to be the jailer with his dinner, he did not raise his head, and Grizel had time to note the change the few days of confinement had made in his loved face. So sad, yet so resigned, so hopeless, yet so noble in his sorrow, it broke her heart to look upon him. With a light step she approached him and laid her trembling hand on his shoulder. Oh, what a look of joy flashed into his dark eyes as he raised them, and saw her, his daughter, his darling Grizel, standing before him. With a cry of delight he clasped her to his heart, and held her close, blessing her again and again for her disobedience to his commands.

It was late in the day before Grizel left him, for the jailer was tender-hearted, and knew what it was to love a young daughter himself. By the kindness of this man Sir John Cochrane and poor Grizel were left uninterrupted, and she was able to

tell him of what her grandfather had done in his behalf. Sir John shook his head sadly; yet, in spite of his doubts, hope once more took possession of his heart; and when Grizel rose to return home, she saw with delight how the old fire had returned to his eyes and the smile to his lips.

"And you will come to me to-morrow, my sweet child?" he said, as he held her fondly.

"No, dear father," she answered, "nor the next day." Then seeing how his face changed, she went on, "Do not be hurt or surprised at my answer. Trust me, dear, that if I do not come it is because I cannot, and that it is for your sake I stay away."

"I cannot read your meaning, Grizel."

"Do not try, my father. Give me your blessing before I go. O father dear, prisons are strong, but love is stronger."

"Grizel, child!" he exclaimed, as he held her so that he could look into her sweet face, "what is this? What project have you in your mind? If you think to move King James by your prayers, put the thought away. The court is no place for you. You little think of the dangers you would encounter."

"I am a Cochrane, my father," answered the girl proudly, as she drew her slight figure up to its full height. "Fear nothing for me. For your sake I will dare all."

And so she left him, puzzled and pained, but pleased and comforted in spite of all.

As she entered Dundonald Castle, Rob and Jamie, full of importance, met her. So eager were they to tell her that Juniper was fed and groomed, and in excellent condition, and that his saddle and harness were complete and in good order, that they almost forgot to ask about their father; and yet they loved him dearly.

"There are some things I must do, and then, dear laddies, I must sleep, for I never closed my eyes last night, and I am well-nigh wearied out. Can you watch for me, that I do not oversleep myself? Can I trust you to wake me at daybreak?"

Of course she might trust them. Who so delighted and proud to be trusted as Jamie and Rob? Not only would they watch and wake all night, but Juniper should be ready for her at any minute, and, moreover, they undertook to make a raid upon the buttery when the servants were sleeping, to purloin a hearty breakfast for Grizel before she started on her mysterious expedition.

The first pale streaks of dawn lighted up a little group of figures at a small postern apart from the greater and more public gateway of the castle. Foremost was Rob, his black locks blown about his bright face by the keen mountain air, and with

Juniper's bridle in his hand. Jamie and Grizel stood within the doorway, she with a horseman's dark cloak, which concealed her figure from head to foot, while a broad slouched hat hid her face. It was but a few moments they stood thus, and then, with a hurried embrace, she sprang lightly on Juniper's back, and, with a parting wave of the hand, was gone.

The two boys watched her retreating figure till a turn in the road hid her from their sight; and then, without a word, they re-entered the castle, and shut and fastened the gate behind them.

CHAPTER II.

"In my heart
Lie there what hidden woman's fear there will,
We'll have a swashing and a martial outside."
As You Like It.

SCARCELY staying anywhere, except for such slight refreshment and rest as were absolutely necessary to herself and the hardy little Juniper—and these she always sought in country cottages out of the beaten track—at the close of the second day after leaving Edinburgh Grizel found herself on the English side of the Border, and nearing her nurse's home, which was situated about four miles from Berwick. So far all had gone well; she had ridden unquestioned and unnoticed, and tired though she was, her spirits rose with the hope that her expedition might end as well as it had begun.

The inhabitants of the little hamlet where Nurse Cameron lived were closing their tiny casements for the night, when a solitary horseman rode slowly along the straggling street. Many came to their doors to inspect the stranger, whose slouched hat

caused so deep a shadow that in the growing darkness his face could scarce be seen. Of one of these inquisitive rustics Grizel—for it was she, though she rode man's fashion to avoid notice—inquired in the gruffest tones she could assume for Mistress Cameron, and before many more minutes had passed she stopped at the house of her humble friend.

"An' wha may ye be?" said Mistress Cameron, as she opened the door to Grizel's smart rap. "An' what can I do for ye, gentle sir?"

"Let me step inside," said Grizel softly, "and I'll tell you." And, with Juniper's bridle on her arm, she slipped past the astonished old woman, and stood in the little kitchen place which served for dining-room and bed-chamber besides; then she threw off her broad hat and turned her glowing face to the keen gray eyes that gazed so curiously at her strange visitor.

"Do you not know me, nurse?" she asked.

"Hech! an' is it my ain bonnie bairn, come a' this weary way to gladden my auld een? Come in, Miss Grizel; come in, an' welcome are ye as flowers in May!"

"But my horse, nurse—poor Juniper! He has carried me well, and is tired and hungry; what must I do with him?" said Grizel, anxious for her gallant little steed.

"Horse, said ye? An' where may it be, hinny?" asked Nurse Cameron, looking curiously round the small apartment, as she might have done for a lap-dog.

Grizel touched the bridle on her arm. "Follow this clue," she said, smiling. "You will not have to look far."

And Mistress Cameron, turning towards the open doorway, saw the shaggy head and wistful shining eyes of the faithful pretty creature, who had borne his mistress so uncomplainingly, and who was gazing longingly at the shelter he would have liked to share with her.

"Ay, surely!" exclaimed the old woman. "We've a bit barn at back, where thy Juniper shall lie in clover; an' here's Donald, thy foster-brother, ye ken, just come in nick o' time to groom him for ye."

Grizel held out a frank hand to the tall, shy, red-haired, lanky lad, who sidled into the kitchen, scarcely daring to look her in the face. But he was willing and eager to look after Juniper, and indeed to do anything in the world for the owner of the pretty pony and the sweetest voice he had ever heard call him brother.

As he led the tired Juniper away to his comfortable bed of new hay, where he could rest and munch his fill, Grizel told her story to her kind nurse. Many

a sigh and moan interrupted the narrative, and tears stood in her old eyes when all was said.

"An' what can ye do, a young lassie in a strange land? Help ye! Ay, wi' my heart's bluid, if that wad do aught; but—"

"You can help me, nurse, and Donald can help too," Grizel said eagerly. "Listen, nursey; this is my plan. I have told you that my grandfather has sent a trusty friend to London to see King James to beg his son's life—nay, I ought to say to buy it, for he carries a heavy purse of gold with him to help his prayers. Grandfather is confident he will prevail; but, nurse, the warrant for my darling father's death may—nay, it most certainly will—arrive before this gracious pardon can be got. Now, I mean to have that warrant, and Donald must help me to it."

Nurse Cameron looked into the flashing eyes of her "bairn," and wondered if trouble had turned her brain.

"I see you think I am daft, nurse, but I am not. I am perfectly in my right mind, and have thought it all out completely. I will stay here for a day or two. You must let me have a suit of Donald's clothes, and if any ask who I am, say I am a young serving-man on my way to a new place at York; or perhaps it would be better to send me far enough, and say London at once."

"Hech! the puir lassie!" murmured the old nurse; but Grizel was excited now, and took no heed of the sighs.

"Donald must make inquiries for me as to the road the postman travels—where he rests, everything about him; his name, when he is expected, what he does. In short, nurse, he must number the very hairs of his head, the inches in each mile he rides, the moments in each day till he draws near, and bring me faithful word. When I know all I shall be ready for him, and God will guide me how to deal with him."

"My bairn, ye wadna kill him!" exclaimed Mistress Cameron fearfully.

"Heaven forbid!" said Grizel solemnly. "I trust not; but I must be prepared for the worst. See! I am provided for all haps." And she drew from the breast of her riding-coat a brace of small pistols.

"They are fearfu' toys for a leddy's fingers," shuddered the old woman. "I pray ye may hae nae cause to use them."

"Amen to that," said Grizel. "And now that I have told you all I have to do, and all I want, let me rest, nurse dear, for I am indeed aweary."

That very night Donald was off on his secret expedition, well pleased at the trust imposed upon him; and Grizel, dressed in his Sunday suit, which fitted

her sufficiently well, passed for a relative of her humble friends. Many were the curious questions put to her by the simple neighbours during Donald's absence, which she had to parry as best she could.

"O nurse dear, shall I ever be forgiven for all this deception that I am forced to practise?" she would say with a weary sigh; and Nurse Cameron would comfort her, and bid her take heart, for that surely her cause was a good one in the sight of Heaven.

A week passed slowly away, and there was no news of Donald. Grizel had furnished him with money, so that the poor lad might not want for anything while he was employed in picking up information in all sorts of odd places. The time seemed very long to her who was wishing with a feverish anxiety to be up and doing. Never did days seem so lengthy as those she spent in and about her nurse's cottage, waiting for Donald, who seemed lost entirely.

One night, after a restless day, completely tired out, she lay sleeping on her faithful friend's bed, while the old woman sat by her side, thankful to see her so peacefully resting. Presently the latch was softly lifted, and Donald's red head was poked into the kitchen. In an instant Nurse Cameron made a sign of silence, and the head disappeared as quickly as it came. Seeing that Grizel still slept soundly, she

rose from her seat, and stealthily crossing the room, went out of the door, and softly closed it behind her. Outside, in the shadow of the little barn where Juniper was housed, she found Donald, brimful of his adventures, and eager to tell all.

"Haud thy tongue," said Mistress Cameron in a low voice. "Dinna speak a word here. The very win's will carry the tale. Save it till the lassie wakes. Eh! it's been a weary time, Donald, sin' you went away; she is nigh daft wi' waitin'."

"I couldna help it," answered Donald, in the same tone. "But noo that I'm back, there isna ony time to lose. The mail-bags cam to Durham last night, an' the postman wha brings them on will be in Belford at six in the mornin'. There's a wee bit public where he stays to rest before he crosses the Border, kept by a widdy woman, and it's there that Miss—"

"Whisht, laddie! She's here!" And so she was, for even as Mistress Cameron spoke Grizel stood before them.

Donald's look of astonishment at seeing a young fellow of about his own height, where he thought to see his pretty foster-sister, was not lost upon her. But Grizel took no notice of it. And choking down his bewilderment, he followed her and Mistress Cameron back to the house.

His tale was soon told, for he was too eager for

Grizel to be on her way to be long in telling it. He would have liked to bear her company, but this was impossible. Juniper was the only horse they had, and she would have been only embarrassed by his presence, besides; so poor Donald's hope of further adventures was disappointed. For all that, he cheerfully saddled Juniper, and watched with profound respect and awe the skilful manner in which Grizel examined her pistols; and when all her preparations were made, he held her stirrup while she mounted, and saw her ride off into the darkness, with a heroic self-denial she little dreamed of.

The distance from Berwick to Belford was not great. She had no fear of not accomplishing it before six in the morning. Juniper had fared well during Grizel's enforced idleness, and was in good humour and condition. The fear was that she would arrive too soon, and incur suspicion by having ridden all night. If she could have curbed her impatience, it would have been better to have started later; but she was on her way now, and all she could do was to throw the reins on Juniper's shaggy neck and let him take his own pace. This he did very soon. From a gallop he got to a trot, from a trot to a gentle amble, and from an amble to a leisurely walk; and when morning broke over the hilltops, and lighted up all the beautiful country with a rosy flush, he

stopped outright, and, regardless of his young mistress's light weight, proceeded to crop by the roadside his simple breakfast.

"You are taking it very easy, June," said Grizel, patting his neck as she spoke; and "June," as she called him, just pricked his ears and looked out of the corners of his eyes to show that he heard, but he did not leave off munching.

So she dismounted, and securely fastening his bridle to a tree in the straggling hedgerow, sat down to watch the sunrise, and to think over her plans. But she could form none. The more she thought about her dangerous enterprise the more she felt she must leave all to the exigencies of the moment. How she should meet the man, who, however innocently, was the messenger of death to her beloved father, or where she should meet him, she did not know, and could not guess.

"I must leave all to Heaven," she murmured. "So far I have been guided, and I will trust to the end."

Just then a distant bell tolled out slowly the hour of four. Four o'clock on a sunny morning in June! Who can describe its loveliness—the dewy sweetness of the air, the sparkle on each fresh leaf, the songs of the birds, the ripple of the green corn as the breeze passes over it, the scent of flowers, the beauty over all nature? It was almost too beautiful

for poor, lonely Grizel; and if she had not had a brave little heart, the tears which, in spite of her endeavours, forced themselves into her eyes would have fallen. But she dried them quickly and started up. She did not know how far she had still to go, but she could no longer bear inaction. Juniper was slow to understand the necessity of leaving his breakfast, and seemed inclined to rebel. He shook his shaggy head, and kept away from Grizel by the length of his bridle, and sidled and pranced in the most wilful manner. And it was not till she had coaxed and scolded, and bribed him by a piece of oaten bread with which Nurse Cameron had furnished her wallet, that he suffered her to mount, and proceeded on his way in anything like a respectable style.

Grizel had not gone far when in the distance she saw some farming men approaching. Now was the time to find out how far it was to Belford; yet she felt strangely nervous at meeting them. She had to remind herself that the neighbours at the little hamlet where her nurse lived had shown only curiosity about her business—no suspicion that the tall, slight stripling laddie was not what he appeared to be. Pulling her slouched hat well over her brows, she assumed as bold an air as she was capable of as the men neared her, and asked in a loud voice how far it was to Belford.

The men stopped and took a leisurely view of the speaker, then scratched their scrubby heads in a meditative manner, while they debated among themselves whether "it wur a matter of six or seven mile, or maybe six an' a 'arf." Grizel thanked them, and without waiting further, gave a smart cut with her whip to the astonished Juniper, who was quite unaccustomed to such treatment, and dashed off, leaving the men with mouths open, gaping after her.

At the speed she went now she soon reached the little village of Belford, and had no difficulty, from Donald's faithful description, in finding the "widdy woman's" little hostelry. The house was astir, the "widdy" herself at the door, when Grizel drew rein and dismounted. She looked curiously at the stranger, as country folk are apt to do to this day, but led the way into the broad kitchen without a question.

"Breakfast, is it? Ay, there's a piece o' pickled pork and a loaf o' white bread; an' there's a prime cup o' ale as'll help ye on your way, wherever that may be." And she looked inquiringly at her visitor.

Grizel gazed round. There was no signs of any one else being there. If the postman had not arrived, she must await his coming; so she seated herself at the table, and made show of a better appetite than she really had. Just then a tremendous snore sounded

through the house, which actually made her jump and drop the knife she had taken up.

The woman laughed. "It's only John Dobbs," she said in explanation. "He always gets a sleep here before he goes on. He's only been here half an hour, but he's had 'is cheese and bread an' a cup or two of ale, an' he's as sound as a church."

"And who may John Dobbs be?" asked Grizel with a beating heart.

"Who? Why, who should he be but postman—the man as carries the mails—don't ye know? Shall I get ye some ale?"

"I would rather have some water," said Grizel faintly. "I am overtired, I think."

"Ye look but puirly," said the widow, noting the boy's pale cheek. "I've no water fit to drink in the house. Ye'd better have some spirit."

Grizel shook her head. "Can you get me some water?" she asked. "I will pay you for it the same as if it were ale."

What could the "widdy" do but fetch the water for the "puir tired-looking laddie," who put her in mind of her own dear boy before he went to sea? She took a pitcher from the dresser and went out, saying as she did so,—

"Mind ye make no noise. I would not have ye wake John Dobbs for the world; he's an awfu'

man in his tempers, and his pistols are always loaded."

Then she was gone, and Grizel rose to her feet. John Dobbs in the very house, and sleeping! Like a shadow she passed into the little side-room, where lay the man who held her father's fate in his hands. For a moment she trembled so that she could hardly stand; then she stepped forward. John Dobbs's burly form lay before her. On the floor by his side, within reach of his hand, were his pistols. There was no doubt that his sleep was sound, as his prolonged snoring testified; but the mail-bags, which Grizel would have given her life to obtain, were pillowed securely beneath his shaggy head.

CHAPTER III.

"Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all."

GRIZEL stood dismayed, with a feeling of utter despair creeping over her. What could she do? To remove those mail-bags from their position without awaking the man was an impossibility. She had a wild idea of cutting open the ends with the sharp knife with which she had provided herself, and so drawing forth the contents; but an instant's thought showed her that discovery would result the moment the widow returned. Oh, horror! she had forgotten her very existence; she would be back before she had accomplished anything. Stay—the pistols! Ah! well thought of; and Grizel stooped and raised the heavy weapons from the floor. A minute more, and she had skilfully drawn their charges, which she hid away behind an old oaken chest of drawers that looked as though they had been built in with the house, so immovable was their appearance. Then she laid the pistols down again as she had found them,

and stole back to her seat in the outer room. "I have drawn their teeth," she thought, as she sat down to the table once more. "They can no longer bite. Heaven grant it may not be discovered; but if it be, I cannot lose my life in a better cause." As the hostess of the little inn did not make her appearance, Grizel had time to recover her self-control. She even forced herself to eat some bread and meat, and felt better for doing so. The warm blood stole back to her cheeks, and her hands lost the trembling that had seized them. When the woman came in, her quick eye noted the change, and she said with a smile,—

"See now what a bit o' good food 'as done for ye. If ye'll let me put a dash o' brandy—the real thing, mind you—in a cup o' this water, ye'll be right well set up."

Grizel smiled; she was herself again. "Thank you, but I would rather take just the water; I am so thirsty."

"My faith, I think so," said the widow, when Grizel set the pitcher down; "why, ye've drunk the better part o' a pint, I should say."

"And a pint of ale I will pay for, good hostess," she returned. "And now I will be jogging 'while my boots are green,' as the saying is."

The woman laughed, and going outside with her guest, untethered Juniper, who had had a feed of

corn; and with a feeling of intense relief Grizel took her departure.

"Hi!" cried the woman, with a laugh, "ye are going the way ye came. That sup of ale has gotten in your head."

"Oh, I know the way I want to go well enough," answered Grizel carelessly; and the woman turned indoors, wondering "who yon little spark could be, and where he was going."

Ay, where? Poor Grizel hardly knew what the next step was to be; but she had one fixed idea—not to lose sight of John Dobbs. She could not be wrong if she kept to the highroad, and she remembered that at no great distance it had led through a little wood. On the outskirts of this wood she resolved to wait for him. The fresh air revived her spirits, and she lifted her hat and allowed it to play about her temples and cool her forehead, burning as it felt with too much anxious thought. But waiting was hard work—in that Juniper and she were of one mind; and both fretted with impatience at the enforced delay. Besides, from time to time there were people passing, who regarded her curiously, and she was nervously afraid of exciting suspicion. So she once more turned June's head towards Belford, and trotted back towards a point where she could command a view of a good stretch of road. As she reached it

she observed in the distance the figure of a horseman, with some bulky object placed before him on the saddle. Her heart gave a great bound as she saw him, for something seemed to tell her that the moment had come. Nearer and nearer he approached, and turning once more, she let her horse retrace his steps, so that the postman might overtake her. Soon the rapid tramp of John Dobbs's horse fell upon her ear, as he came along at good speed. Clear and loud his hoofs rang out upon the hard road, until with a dash he passed her.

"Hallo, friend!" she called out, as she put Juniper to his speed and galloped after him. "What's your hurry? Can't we ride together?"

John Dobbs cast a look out of the corner of his eye at the young stripling who so boldly challenged him.

"Oh, ay," he answered, with a surly smile, "if your bit of a horse can keep up, my young master; else he must need be left behind. My business is not one that can wait."

Grizel thought of the two hours' sleep he had taken by the way, but said with the air of a saucy boy,—

"Keep up! No fear of that. My pony is worth two of your heavy breed of horse, and could beat it in speed in no time." And with the second sharp cut poor Juniper had received that day, away Grizel

went ahead, turned round with a gallant sweep, and came laughing back.

"You're not so heavily weighted as I am, youngster," said John Dobbs grimly. "If it were not for these bags, you should see."

"Lay them on my pony's neck," said Grizel boldly, "and you'll see then I'll win."

"Not for my life," exclaimed the man. "Nay; hands off! Would ye dare touch his Majesty's mails? Out of my road, young scapegrace. What mean ye by delaying me in this fool's manner?"

Grizel gave a hasty look round. No one was in sight. And riding close beside the enraged postman, she laid her hand upon the bags.

"I've taken a fancy to these same mails," she said, "and mean to have them."

The man looked at her in astonishment, all his anger gone in surprise.

"If you are joking, boy, well, in God's name, have your joke, so long as you keep clear of my road. But if you mean mischief, then your blood be on your head; though I am sorry to spill it, for your mother's sake."

He drew forth one of his heavy pistols as he spoke, and deliberately cocking it, held the muzzle close to Grizel's head.

"Nay, then, since I see this is no child's play,

young in such wickedness as you are, the Lord have mercy on ye!"

But to his amazement a flash was the only result of the pulled trigger; and seeing that Grizel was bent on possessing herself of the mails, he threw the treacherous pistol to the ground, sprang from his horse, and presented the other at her, but with the same effect. In an instant Grizel had jerked the bridle from his hand, and seizing it herself, dashed off with the postman's heavy steed in tow. At a little distance she stopped, and presenting her own pistol, said in a ringing voice,—

"Not another step nearer, on your life—not one, I charge you! There is no doubt about my weapon, and you are a dead man if you attempt to follow me. And mind you, John Dobbs, see that you make no alarm. There are those awaiting me in yonder wood who will give you a warm reception. Look to your own safety."

Then she galloped off with her capture, nor turned to see the effects of her speech till she reached the shelter of the forest. When she did so, John Dobbs was making his way back to Belford on foot; and Grizel, wasting not one moment, turned aside from the main road, and breaking through the thick undergrowth of bracken, buried herself in the depths of the thicket. There she dismounted, and fastening up

the horses, unstrapped the heavy mail-bags. Then, with a beating heart and eager hand, she ripped them open. Letters! letters! packages of all descriptions. Ah! what was this with great red seals and flourishing direction? Nearly blinded with agitation, she forced herself to read it through, lest she should perchance destroy the precious pardon. But there was no mistaking the fatal words which doomed her dear father to the executioner's hands. With a heart full of thankfulness she tore it up into fragments, lest she should be overtaken before she could dispose of it. Then she set the postman's horse free to find his way back to Belford if he chose, and hiding the mail-bags and their contents beneath the bracken and brushwood, she wrapped the scraps of the warrant in her handkerchief, and placed them in the breast of her coat.

"Juniper," she said, kissing the little creature on his shiny nose, "we've done a good day's work, come what will of it. Now for Berwick at your best pace, my pony!" And as if he knew what was wanted of him, he scrambled like a cat out of the tangle on to the highroad, and betook himself and his brave young mistress at a rattling rate back to Nurse Cameron.

"My bairn, what news?" cried she as Grizel entered.

"The best," was the answer.—"Shut the door,

Donald; fasten it. Juniper will not stray while I am here.—Blow up the turf, nursey dear. See, see how it burns! Look how the great seals melt in the fire! The king's warrant is a heap of ashes. God grant I have saved his life."

"And nae bluid shed?" asked nurse anxiously. "An' nae hurt to yoursel?"

"None, dear nurse. John Dobbs got a scare—that's all. But I must away. There will be a rout to find the robbers; for depend upon it, Donald, John Dobbs will not own to have been vanquished by one stripling lad. He'll swear to half a score at least."

So she took leave of her humble friends, as much for their sake as her own; and in her woman's clothes, with her broad hat and riding cloak as before, started for Edinburgh with her joyful tidings.

Whether she did not urge her little steed to such speed as he had used on his outward journey, or whether the way was more hilly on the return, certain it is that she was some hours longer in going back to Edinburgh. It was early morning when she neared that city, and she was going at a good pace, hoping to reach her grandfather's house before the town was astir. Now and then as she dashed along it seemed to her that she heard a second horse's hoofs upon the road, and a fear filled her heart that she was followed, that upon the very threshold of her

home, as it were, she should be taken prisoner. Fearfully she cast a glance behind, and sure enough at a little distance off was a single horseman. Hoping to outride him, she urged the willing Juniper to his utmost; but the horse of her pursuer was a powerful one, and, moreover, was not tired as poor little shaggy was. A few minutes decided the unequal race, and the horseman was riding by her side.

"I thought I knew the make of this pony," said he, in a voice that made Grizel start, and draw the collar of her cloak about her chin, as though the air came too chilly for her; but she made no reply. Apparently the stranger waited for one, for there was a pause as they rode on together side by side.

"I could have sworn," said he vehemently, as though his passion had gathered strength in the interval, "that this horse was that of a dear friend of mine—one to whom I have trusted everything. I am mistaken, it seems."

"The horse has not changed owners," said Grizel quietly.

"Then what masquerading is this, Grizel Cochrane?" he asked angrily; and with one sweep of his hand he pushed the slouched hat from her fair head, and it fell behind in the dust of the road.

The colour mounted to her cheek with a sudden flash, and she stopped Juniper in his homeward gallop.

"Why am I denied your presence, to find you—" But she stopped him with a quick gesture.

"You will pick up my hat, Andrew Ker," she said proudly; and as he did so, and silently restored it to her, she added, "And at some future time you will ask my pardon." Without another word she left him standing on the highway looking after her in astonishment. What did it mean? Could it indeed be his gentle Grizel—she who but a week ago had seemed but a child?

* * * * *

Oh, those boys, Jamie and Rob, and their old grandfather, the biggest boy of them all! What a welcome Grizel had when she reached the castle, and what rejoicings there were when she told her story! The earl threw his velvet skull-cap up to the rafters of the old hall, and Rob declared that Grizel deserved to be knighted, and fetched a long sword quite as big as himself for his grandfather to dub her. Nothing would do but that she must kneel down, and the earl must strike her on the shoulder, and then she must rise up Sir Grizel—a title which the boys persisted in giving her ever afterwards.

"And John Dobbs," said Jamie, when this bit of merriment was over, "what became of him, Sir Knight?"

"Why, of course," blustered Rob, "Sir Grizel shot him, and left his body to the crows."

"No," said Grizel, patting the little fellow's cheek; "Sir Grizel did not. There was no bloodshed, thank God! I was afraid I might have to shoot him though, he looked so big and fierce; but people are not always what they seem."

"That's true, my child," said the old earl, fondling her hand. "When I look at thy fair young face, Grizel, I cannot help wondering how he could have mistaken thee for a highway robber, and how he could have feared this slender hand of thine."

"He didn't, grandfather," cried Rob; "it was the pistol in it."

"Andrew Ker has been here," whispered Jamie, "but we put him off with a woman's headache one day, and a toothache on the next; and then he came no more. What will you tell him, sister?"

"The truth, my boy, when I can do so," said Grizel quietly. "But he is on the king's side, you know, and would himself have taken me prisoner had he known my errand."

A week later the king's gracious pardon came, bought with five thousand pounds of the good old earl's money, and Sir John Cochrane was released. It was only when he found himself at home with his children and his father once more that he knew he owed his life to his brave young daughter. But for her his execution would have taken place before

the pardon could arrive. He had loved her dearly all her life, but what must have been his affection for her then?

The mails were late that time; but then people were not accustomed to have their letters delivered to them every morning to the minute, as they are now. A heavy rain, a high wind, a fall of snow, a horse falling lame or casting a shoe—any trifling matter, in short—would delay the mails a day or more. It is not recorded in the chronicles of the time how John Dobbs got out of his scrape, nor whether they sent the constables after the robbers.

Some time after all this happened, Grizel Cochrane was married to a gentleman named Andrew Ker; so it is to be supposed that he asked her pardon, and that she was graciously pleased to grant it.

THE STORY OF WINEFRED, COUNTESS OF NITHSDALE.

THE STORY OF WINEFRED, COUNTESS OF NITHSDALE.

1715.

CHAPTER I.

Imo. "Oh, for a horse with wings!.....
Prithee, speak—
How many score of miles may we well ride
'Twixt hour and hour?
Pis. One score 'twixt sun and sun,
Madam, 's enough for you, and too much too.
Imo. Why, one that rode to's execution, man,
Could never go so slow."

Cymbeline.

"MISTRESS EVANS! Jeannie! dinna gang awa before ye ha' telt me ye are no angry wi' me!"

"I do not take that much thought about you," was the scornful reply; and the speaker, a comely woman of four or five and twenty, pulled her hood closer over her face, and half turned her back on her companion.

Certainly one would not have expected to encounter

a pair of lovers abroad on such a night as this; for if shelter anywhere could be had, this was a time to seek it. Yet these two young people stood just under the shadow of a great rock that jutted across the steep and winding path, while the strong wind tore and buffeted at them; but so much tempest seemed to rage within their hearts that they were unconscious of the storm without.

"Jeannie!" entreated the young man, "ye ken weel I love ye dearly. Why are ye sae sair wi' me?"

"Why, you great long-legged creature, for all the world like the silly calf you are, what would you have of me? I've had enough and to spare of you, Johnnie M'Dougal; and to save you further trouble, I'll tell you at once that when I wed, it shall be with a man, not a laddie scarce off and away from his mother's apron-strings; and it shall be with a brave man too, and not a coward."

"I'm no coward, Jeannie," answered the young man reproachfully.

"No? Oh! then I find I mistook you. I thought I was talking with Johnnie M'Dougal—he that, when he heard that the earl, his rightful lord and master, was calling up his men to fight the Southron, hid himself away till they were well over the Border, and then comes back as cool as the wind in May."

"Ye are in the wrang, Jeannie. I tell ye, an' I telt afore, that twa ewes had strayed, an' wha but me to seek 'em? An' didna I gang up an' down, here an' there, abroad an' afar, to find them; an' when I returnit my lord was awa."

"And monstrous glad you were, to say the least," she answered with a taunting laugh.

"Weel," he replied cautiously, "fightin's no sic pleasant wark that I need to greet about it. But I'm no coward for a' that."

"Well, put that count by, Johnnie M'Dougal," she returned. "If you were as brave as the earl himself, I would have none of you. I might be badly off for a husband to take a bit lad young enough to be my son, and not a pound to the fore either."

There was really no great difference in age between Mistress Evans, Lady Nithsdale's waiting-woman, and her woe-begone suitor; but what there was, was on the wrong side. Besides which she had a becoming sense of her own station and education, and felt no small indignation at the presumption of the young herdsman.

"Think weel," he said, "before ye crush a man's heart oot, Jeannie; for I tell ye, if ye say me nay, I willna live to bide it."

"The Nith is deep enough and broad enough to hold you, Johnnie, but you'd find it over cold to-night. Go home to your mammie, and leave talking

such daft nonsense." And Mistress Evans turned away, and commenced to mount the steep path leading to the castle. But he spoke again.

"Jeannie, once mair. Will ye never say ay?"

"Make yourself sure of that, Johnnie M'Dougal."

"Then I'll never gang hame mair. I'll awa the night, an' if aught befa' me—"

"Which it never will," she laughed. "You are over careful of yourself to ail much. Good-night to you." And Mistress Evans disappeared in the increasing darkness, while Johnnie plunged down the narrow pathway which led to the valley, his mind filled with schemes whereby he might punish this saucy damsel.

Should he indeed drown himself in the Nith, that when his body was found she would weep for his untimely end? Or should he make his way to join the earl, and so show her he was no coward? He could not decide then, but something desperate he was determined to do; and while in fancy he figures in a dozen heroic scenes, Mistress Evans has made her way home out of the storm.

There was a huge blazing fire of logs burning on the great hearth in Nithsdale Castle, which cast its ruddy glow on a strange group of figures around. It was a cold December evening, and dogs and men alike all huddled together for warmth round the

cheerful blaze; while outside the massive stone walls the wind played many a mournful tune, now fiercely battling against the deep-set casements, and then whirling away, swept through the valley below with wild howls full of melancholy foreboding. The great hall, too, wore an aspect of desertion. There were no stalwart figures stalking to and fro, no drinking out of rudely-shaped beakers, no singing of songs or rough play going on. There were only very young lads and old men present, and every one wore a certain air of expectancy as they lay in groups about the blazing hearth. And well might they look grave, for all their strength had departed on the day that their lord, at the head of three hundred fighting-men, had ridden forth to join his force with that of the Earl of Mar and other rebel lords at Newcastle. This was now nigh four months ago, and but scanty news, and that of but small encouragement, had come to those left behind. Day by day they expected to hear that the king, for the Pretender had already been proclaimed, had arrived; and still he stayed, till some of his most loyal adherents lost heart, and others whispered among themselves that they had done ill to risk life and land for one who loved ease and luxury better than his devoted subjects.

It was a weary time waiting for tidings in those days, for there were no telegraphs then as there are now to flash the news from end to end of the kingdom. Battles might be fought, and to those dwelling in such remote parts as Nithsdale, three weeks might grow into three months before the anxious wife would know that he she watched for would never come again. Lady Nithsdale, shut up in her lonely tower with only a few old servitors for her protectors, had suffered all the tortures of suspense; and now suspense had grown into an agony of fear.

Within the last ten days she had learned that King James's followers had been defeated in a battle fought at Dunblane, and for aught she knew her lord might even now be numbered with the slain, for she had had no token from him for many weeks.

"Whisht, callants, will ye!" said an old gray-bearded man, who seemed to take the command, to a couple of wild-looking lads, who, with a heron's feather apiece, were amusing themselves by tickling each other's faces, and from time to time bursting into a noisy laugh. "Whisht, I say! Yelping curs rouse mastiffs, an' weel I ken ye will hae my leddy aboot yer lugs. I thought but now a cry cam on the blast, an' but for yer senseless daffin'—"

Even as he spoke, a long, shrill cry, thrice repeated, like that of a screech-owl, was borne on their ears;

and the men rose to their feet with one accord. At the same moment a heavy oaken door at the top of a flight of steps was flung open, and their lady stood before them.

"That is my lord's signal!" she cried with an eager voice that rang through the hall. "Be quick, laddies, and light the way. Our Lady send it may be himself!"

Lady Nithsdale swept down the steep stone stairs as she spoke, and stood in their midst, a tall and shapely figure, with her long fair hair all unbound, falling in wavy masses around her. A dozen eager hands snatched the burning brands from the fire, while others unbarred the great door, and with yells of delight the impetuous throng rushed forth. Away they went across the big, bare courtyard, their flaming torches at one moment blazing high in the darkness, and the next apparently extinguished by the fitful, boisterous wind. Leaping, scrambling, and shouting as they went, they mounted to a watch-tower that commanded the valley below; and there, like a troop of demons suddenly released from the lower regions, they waved aloft their fiery signals. There is a dead silence in the hall as Lady Nithsdale strains her eyes into the darkness—a long pause that to her wildly-beating heart seems well-nigh a lifetime; and then a wind-tossed figure comes

out of the night, staggers across the court, and enters the hall. His plaid is torn and draggled, his bare feet stained and bloody, his long hair blown wildly over his dazzled eyes. For a moment he glances round with a scared look at the faces about him, and then drops on the floor at his lady's feet.

"It is Jamie, my lord's foster-brother!" she cried. "Give me your flask, Fergus, quick!" And sinking on her knees she herself tenderly raised the uncouth head of the poor fainting man to her lap, and held the reviving spirit to his lips. Impatient as she was at this delay, she still tended him, till, with a sigh, he once more opened his eyes; and as he strove to regain his feet, she motioned to her rude attendants to assist him.

"Set food and drink before him!" she commanded, as, dragging a heavy settle forward, they placed him near the fire. "But now," she went on, as she watched the colour returning to Jamie's blanched lips and cheeks, "give me my lord's message, or his letter, if you have one. I can wait no longer. Speak!"

"Ill news, my leddy," said the man hoarsely; "but I'm thankfu' I've been spairt to bring it. I've run like a hound when I could, an' hidit like a mole when I must, a' the way fro' Preston, to bring my lord's last message to ye."

"His last, Jamie? Holy Mary! is my lord dead?"

"Well-nigh, my leddy. He an' six mair lords are in the honds o' the Southron."

"A prisoner!" she whispered faintly; then as the men who had gathered round to listen raised a wail, she turned fiercely upon them.

"Hush!" she cried; "this is no time for weak lamentings. What else, Jamie? Tell me all."

"I've a bit letter for ye, my leddy, if the weet hasna washed it awa." And fumbling in his breast, Jamie at last, with trembling hand, produced it. Lady Nithsdale snatched it from him, and turning aside pressed it to her lips; then she tore it open and read,—

"PRESTON, *November 13, 1715.*

"MY WINEFRED, MY HEART,—I have no time to do other than tell thee suddenly that I am a prisoner. General Forster has proved himself a leader indeed, and has led us to destruction. In another hour I shall be on my way to London, to take up my lodging in the Tower. What else may befall I cannot tell, but a brave man can die but once. Come to me if thou canst, that I may see thee once more.—Thine, NITHSDALE."

Some women under such cruel circumstances would

have fainted; most women would have wept. Winefred, Lady Nithsdale, did neither. She was very pale, even to the lips, when she turned, after reading her husband's letter; but her voice was firm as she addressed her old servitor.

"Fergus, by this time my lord is a prisoner in the Tower. I am going to London to him. Look that two good horses be ready for me in an hour."

With that, with stately step she passed away, leaving them as much amazed as though she had announced a journey to the moon, so far and so impossible did such an expedition seem to these simple souls.

The door closed behind Lady Nithsdale, and she found herself alone in her chamber—alone, save for her sleeping child, a lovely boy of seven or eight years, lying in happy unconsciousness in his pallet bed. For a moment the tears rushed to her eyes as she looked on him, and she flung up her arms with a gesture of despair; but she crushed back her grief, and murmuring, "I have no time for tears," turned away. Going towards a low door at one end of the chamber, she laid her hand upon the rude lock, but paused, and musingly withdrew it. "No," she thought, "I have something to do before I call Evans—something for your sake, my boy."

Without a moment's hesitation she threw open the

doors of a large closet, and took out a dark cloak, which she put on, drawing the hood closely over her head. Then she felt along the back of the closet till she found a slight indentation. This she pressed with all her force, and the panel sliding aside showed a secret recess. From this she took money and jewels, and last, but not least, a large packet of parchments, which she hid in the folds of her cloak.

"If Argyle comes here," she thought, "he shall have naught for his pains; and I doubt not, when he learns of my dear lord's misfortunes, he will swoop down on the old place like a bird of prey."

At the outer side of the chamber the rough stone wall was hung with arras; and after carefully closing the secret closet, she lifted this, and disclosed a low arched doorway. She removed an iron bar that secured the door, and, opening it, went down a narrow, winding stone stair that brought her to another door, which again she silently and stealthily unfastened, and stood outside in what she loved to call her garden. It was a little nook sheltered from the bleak winds by the walls of the castle, which rose steeply on two sides of it. The night was a dark one, but Lady Nithsdale knew where to find the implement she wanted; and five minutes of vigorous digging made a deep hole, into which she

put the precious parchments, wrapped closely in a cloth she had seized from the closet in her first hurry. But hurried as were her movements, her mind had at once grasped the whole situation; and she spared no pains in her present occupation to leave all perfect. Having deposited her treasures with care, she filled in the hole, and trod it well down, a little rift in the heavy clouds affording light enough to enable her to finish the work in a business-like manner. Then gathering up a handful of withered leaves she cleansed the spade before returning it to its place, and drew some straggling sprays of ivy over the newly-turned earth, and scattered some more dead leaves over it. This completed, she re-entered the castle, and with the same noiseless action closed and barred the doors behind her. But she drew a long breath of relief when she once more stood in her own chamber. Until then she hardly knew how much she had risked.

She hastily threw off her cloak and hood, and replaced them in the huge closet, and shook out the shining masses of her long hair, before she called her woman. Had she done so before, when her hand was on the lock of the turret chamber, it is greatly to be feared that Mistress Evans would not have been there to answer. As it was, she by

this time had returned, and had smoothed her ruffled hair, and was vainly trying to reduce the colour which blazed in her cheeks, when she heard her lady's voice. A few words were sufficient to explain everything to the faithful Evans.

"To London, my lady; but not alone?"

"Not if you will go with me, Evans."

"I will go to the end of the world with you, my leddy."

"Thank you, my good Evans. Methought I knew where to find a friend. But what has brought such a colour to your cheeks to-night? Nay, if I do but make you blush the more, I will not ask."

"'Tis only yon foolish laddie, Johnnie M'Dougal, my leddy," answered Mistress Evans, with a little scornful toss of the head.

"He is a good laddie," said Lady Nithsdale, "if he is a foolish; but you are like the rest of womankind, and love to torment, even as a cat does a mouse. But now we must be speedy. Every minute that we tarry brings him, my lord, my husband, nearer to the—"

She stopped with a shudder; then, crossing herself devoutly, she murmured,—

"Holy Mary, send that I may save him! And now, where to hide all this money, my girl; for we must have wherewith to coax, and bribe, and play

the fox. There's naught like a silver key to ope a prison door, unless it be a gold one. Ah! well thought! My hair is long and thick. He used to play with it and call it golden. We'll prove he was no flatterer when he said it. Roll the broad pieces in, and bind them tight about my head with the thick braids; so shall I wear a crown. Ah, me! it is ill jesting with a heavy heart."

And so it was done. The jewels Lady Nithsdale concealed about her person, and Evans too had her share of valuables to carry. But all this took time, and the hour the lady had named had passed before they stood in the hall fully equipped for the journey, in slouched beaver hats, which half concealed their faces, long, curling riding-wigs falling over their shoulders, and horsemen's large dark cloaks. Thick gauntlet gloves protected as well as concealed their hands; and as the height of both mistress and maid was considerably above the average, the disguise was sufficient, Lady Nithsdale trusted, to secure them from molestation.

"Fergus," she said, as she stood on the threshold of the home she was leaving on a journey so long, and an errand so fraught with danger, that no one could say if she would ever see it more, "look to my boy, and guard him for his father's sake and mine, good friend. I trust him to you. If

the Duke of Argyle come, as like he may, see that you make no hindrance to his will. There is naught within these walls that we would hide." And so with a "Farewell till better times," she was gone, and the darkness closed behind them like a pall.

CHAPTER II.

"Over the mountains
And over the waves;
Under the fountains,
And under the graves;
Under floods that are deepest,
Over rocks that are steepest,
Love will find out the way."

Old Song.

HOW are the dangers and difficulties of such a journey in those days to be described or even imagined by us who live at a time when mountains are tunnelled, and torrents—ay, even wide inlets of the sea—are bridged, as occasion requires, so as to make smooth our path, that we, wrapped in warm rugs, or snugly lying in a luxurious berth, may sleep, if it so pleases us, while we travel from John o' Groat's to the Land's End? Forty years later than the period of which we write, the Edinburgh stage-coach was advertised to perform the journey between that place and London in the short period of ten days in summer, and twelve in winter; and then only "if God permit," as devoutly

set forth in the public announcement by the proprietor, "Hosea Eastgate." At the thought of the distance that lay between her and her much-loved lord, hope almost died in Lady Nithsdale's heart.

But she and Mistress Evans were good horsewomen, as indeed every woman "of condition," as the phrase went, had to be; for in the early part of the eighteenth century it was almost the only way of travelling, and certainly such was the case in Scotland. Moreover, there were few broad roads in that land of moor and mountain, and the travellers were obliged to suffer their horses to pick their own way along the narrow bridle-paths till they came to the valley along which flowed the Nith, at this time a full and rapid stream. Here at least was a guide that would not fail them, and they rode on as swiftly as the darkness and the many intervening obstacles would permit.

We cannot pretend to follow them; and Lady Nithsdale herself, her mind engrossed with endless plans and contrivances, and alternating hopes and fears, has left but slight record of the difficulties she encountered.

"I rode to Newcastle," she says in a letter written by her to her husband's sister, the Countess of Traquair, "and thence took the stage to York. When I arrived there the snow was so deep that the stage could not set out for London. The season was so

severe, and the roads so bad, that the post itself was stopped. However, I took horses and rode to London through the snow, which was generally above the horses' girths."

And so with these few words the devoted woman dismisses this part of the subject. She does not tell how long they were on their anxious journey; nor if they escaped the clutches of the highwaymen, at that time a real terror to travellers; nor what they suffered from fatigue and exposure. It was enough that so far she had been successful, and that she stood in the same city which held her husband.

Fortunately Mistress Evans had a kinswoman living in Thames Street, which at that time contained many handsome houses, the remains of ancient times when it was a fashionable quarter of London, and could boast its villas with their beautiful gardens sloping down to the shining river. To the pleasant house of Mistress Mills, Evans conducted her beloved mistress, where they obtained the repose and refreshment they so much needed. But not for long could Lady Nithsdale remain inactive. February 9th was the day fixed for the trial of the unfortunate noblemen who were implicated in the insurrection of 1715 in favour of him whom they believed to be the rightful King of England—James Edward Stuart. The time was all too short for what she had to do, but in this

interval she exerted herself to the utmost to obtain her husband's pardon. Those were days when she suffered far more than during her long ride from the valley of the Nith to London—days of wearing suspense and hope deferred that break the spirit and consume the very life. Often on her return home, after repeated disappointments, she would throw herself into the arms of her faithful Evans, and weep as though her heart would break.

"It is all of no use!" she would exclaim passionately; "there is no mercy—none. As well ask it of these walls. They are no harder than the Hanoverian's heart. They will not let me even see him—my love, my husband—unless I consent to share his prison; and that I must not do, for—"

She stopped abruptly; and then, clasping Evans about the neck, she whispered in her ear,—

"If there is no hope, no pardon, then *I* will free him! I swear it! He shall not die!"

"O my sweet mistress!" exclaimed poor Evans, who feared her lady's brain was affected, "how can you accomplish that?"

"I cannot say yet, but I will do it. But speak not of it, Evans, I beseech you. You are my only hope. You will aid me, will you not?"

"With my life, dear lady, if you need it."

And so, sustained by the affection of her faithful

friend, the miserable days wore on. The ninth of February, so hoped for, so dreaded, passed, and the doomed noblemen went back to their prisons to await their fate. But the Earl of Nithsdale carried with him there a vision that filled even those gloomy walls with light. As sentence was being pronounced, he had raised his head, and there before him, among a crowd of faces, was one like to the face of an angel —the face of his fair wife, her sweet lips parted, her whole soul in her eloquent eyes, and radiant with love and hope. For one short moment he saw her; the next she was lost in the tumultuous throng of people as they rose from their seats to jostle their way from the hall, the day's show being over.

From that day Lady Nithsdale gave all her energies to planning her husband's escape. She knew that the condemned gentlemen were preparing a petition to the House of Lords asking that it would intercede between them and the king. But she trusted it not. If it succeeded, it was well; but she would be prepared for its failure. Many were the secret missions that the trusty Evans was charged with to distant parts of the city at the dusky time of evening, so as to avoid notice and consequent suspicion. There was a certain wig of a sandy colour that curiously resembled the manner in which their kind hostess, Mistress Mills, wore her

own auburn locks, and some paint of the same tint, as well as some white and red pigments. A long dark cloak, with a bright purple-coloured riding-hood, which also bore an astonishing likeness to that article of clothing worn by the excellent woman, was procured; and when all preparations were completed, Lady Nithsdale drew a long sigh of relief, and smiled for the first time since the tidings of her husband's imprisonment had reached her.

"We will cheat the headsman yet, my girl," she said to Evans, as she closed and locked the box containing her treasures.

"But if Mistress Mills will not consent, my lady?"

"Then we will do without her; but she will consent, my dear Evans, have no fear. Are you as sure of your friend Mistress Morgan? Will she serve me in my necessity?"

"She promises in all faith, madam. But why, my lady, do we need her? Are not yourself and Mistress Mills sufficient, with me for a helper without the walls?"

"I need her to make confusion. Three are more difficult to count than two, my good Evans. I shall never win my lord's consent to escape, unless I can assure him of the safety of all concerned in the plot. My first thought was that I would stay in his place

while he got safely off, but to that I knew well he would say nay."

And so the two devoted women plotted and schemed to save a life dearer to one than her own, and the unsuspecting Mills ministered unto them, doing her best to alleviate the suffering of the poor wife, for whom in her good-natured, easy way she had a sincere compassion. But Mistress Evans had a secret cause of disquiet that she had not yet dared to impart to her lady. Several times, when she had been out on the various expeditions connected with procuring the different articles of dress required for the earl's disguise, she had fancied she was watched and followed. Indeed, it had become a certainty in her mind, for repeatedly she had noticed the same tall figure tracking her steps in the distance; and when, after making some purchase, she once more emerged from the shop she had entered, she was conscious of some person slinking away, as if desirous of not being seen.

Always dwelling on the chances of detection, she greatly feared that their plot had been discovered; and she determined herself to become the spy, and to find out, if possible, who it was who so continually and untiringly dogged her footsteps. So one day when Lady Nithsdale was out, as she often was for many hours at a time, Evans sallied forth. Shutting

the house door behind her, she glanced up and down the street. No such figure as she looked for was anywhere in sight, and she commenced walking in the direction which she usually took. Having gone on for about five minutes, she wheeled suddenly round, and there, as she had expected, was the tall figure of the spy in the distance. Without a moment's hesitation she rapidly retraced her steps, while the man, evidently taken by surprise, stood for a second as if in perplexity; then he too turned, and went on before her, till, coming to a street which led down to the river, he turned down and was lost to her sight. But Evans, her senses all quickened by these suspicious circumstances, remembering that there was a narrow lane leading back out of this street, and rightly judging that the spy, whoever he might be, intended to use this so as to fall in behind her once more, again doubled, and, running swiftly along, met him face to face just as he came out into the main street. Both for the moment started back, and then Evans spoke.

"No, Johnnie M'Dougal, you don't slip me that way. I thought those long legs could belong to no one but you. So it is you who are playing the spy on me. You wanted but this to finish you off for a rogue. You graceless varlet!" she continued, giving him a little shake—for she had laid her hands

on his coat, to hold him—"why are you here? and how dare you follow me about in this way?"

"Eh, gude sakes, Mistress Evans, dinna haud me sae hard; I'll no rin. I but wantit to look at yer bonnie face, an' sae I ha' hangit aboot to spy ye; but no for aught wrang, Jeannie. I'm no that fause-hearted carle ye seem to tak me for. O Jeannie, my woman, when I heardit ye were gone to London, I couldna rest; an' I thought mebbe I—though ye ca' me a coward—might be o' some use to ye and my leddy, puir thing. My heart has been sair for her sin' I heard the awfu' tidings, an' though ye mayna think it, I wad spill my bluid to save the earl's."

This was a long speech for simple Johnnie; and Evans looked at him with astonishment, wondering if she dared confide their plans to him. Then her suspicions got the upper hand again, and she said,—

"You are safe to say so, Johnnie: there's none like a coward for bragging; and it looks like spilling your 'bluid,' as you call it, to find you idling about the streets and lanes of London. And for your following me about, and watching and spying, if you think to win my favour by the likes of such doings as that, you are greatly wide of the mark. You will make me hate the very sight of you, as I believe I do."

"Aweel," he answered with a deep sigh, "ye're aye hard wi' me; an' if I could help my lo'e for ye,

I wad, for it brings nought but sair discomfort wi' it. And what grieves me mair than a' is that ye winna believe me to be aught but a liar an' a coward an' an idle unthank. Weel, ye winna be fashed wi' seein' me ony mair, for I hae ta'en a service where my lang legs ye aye scoff at are a recommend. I am to be ane o' the footmen to my lord the Venetian ambassador, an' when I rin by his gran' coach, nane will ca' my legs ower lang."

Is it possible that there was one soft corner in Evans's heart for Johnnie? Certainly she was for a moment thoughtfully silent; the next she said, laughing,—

"Well, they say there is never so strange a thing but a fitting place may be found for it. I never thought your legs would be your welcome, but there's no accounting for tastes. And when does the grub turn butterfly?" she asked tauntingly.

"Gin ye mean, when do I gang to my service," he answered, with a quiet dignity that did not sit ill upon him, "I tell ye ceevilly, to-night. My lord has need o' twa mair footmen than he has a'ready—to mak a goodly show, mebbe, when he taks the road to Dover. An' noo, Jeannie, sin' ye hae nought to say to me but abuse, I tak my leave of ye. But if ye or my leddy want a helper, an' I can do aught, think o' Johnnie M'Dougal."

Without another word he turned and left her, feeling that for once he had had the best of it; but she felt sorely perplexed, for that he knew more of their plans than he indicated she was sure, and she knew not whether to trust him with the whole or not.

CHAPTER III.

"No metal can,
No, nor the hangman's axe, bear half the keenness
Of thy sharp envy. Can no prayers move thee?"
Merchant of Venice.

THE morning of the twenty-second day of February 1716 dawned—the day on which the petition to the House of Lords was to be presented. Lady Nithsdale rose early; she had hardly slept the whole night—indeed, sleep and she had grown to be strangers during these sad and anxious days, and night had become a time to be dreaded. Yet, as she stood before her mirror and arranged her dress with more care to her appearance than she had of late bestowed, there was a warm flush on her fair cheek and a new light in her eyes that made Evans remark,—

"Now you look like my own sweet, winsome lady once more."

"I feel like going to a bridal," she answered; "for I shall see my dear lord to-day, and hear him speak to me once more."

So a sedan-chair was procured, and she was carried to the House of Lords, where she waited among other poor, famishing suppliants who had come there to hear the word, were it only a whisper, that might bid them hope. There were wives there and daughters of the best blood in the land, and sons and aged fathers, waiting while the lives of those they loved hung upon a breath. Lady Nithsdale sat silent, with her hand firmly clasped on that of a young girl, over whose beauty the shadow of a great anguish, that would leave her never again, had fallen.

"How can you sit so patiently?" she asked of Lady Nithsdale. "Have you any hope that the king will grant the petition?"

"No, none."

"Neither have I," she answered. "I have prayed the king, with tears and supplications, to spare my dear lord's life. Sixty thousand pounds have been offered for his pardon alone, and to no purpose. I tell you," she whispered, "it is murder!"

"Hush! dear Lady Derwentwater; do not weep so."

The tidings came at last. The motion for an address to the king for a reprieve had been carried by a small majority; but on its presentation to his Majesty, he had refused to interfere in the cause of justice, and, with the exception of the Earl of

Carnwath and Lord Widdrington, the sentences would be carried out on the morrow.

Lady Derwentwater, with a piercing cry, fell fainting into Lady Nithsdale's arms as she started to her feet.

"Take her from me, my dear lord," she said to an old nobleman, who, with drooping head, stood near. "I have too many griefs of my own to weep for hers, though, our Lady knows, I pity her, poor child!"

She kissed the girl's white cheek, hurriedly left the House, and in a few minutes was on her way to the Tower.

* * * * *

"Ho, there!" she exclaimed, with feigned delight in her voice, as she entered the guardroom of the outer ward of the grim old fortress, the Tower of London; "I bring joyful tidings to the condemned lords. The petition has passed the House in their favour, and doubtless a reprieve will be granted by his gracious Majesty. See," she continued with her most winning smile, "I am not rich; but what I have is yours, to drink to the king and the Parliament." And she distributed the money she had brought with her among the men who lounged there, and who toasted her afterwards for her beauty and liberality, each after his own fashion.

"And now," she said imperiously, "show me to my

lord, the Earl of Nithsdale, that his wife may be the first to tell him the good news."

So the jailer who had the safe-keeping of the earl, taken by surprise, led the way without demanding her order of admission; and opening the door of the strong room where he sat, she passed in, and it was closed behind her. For one moment she stood before him; the next she was in his arms.

"At last!" he cried, as he kissed her upturned face again and again. "I have hungered for thee, my Winefred, my wife! But I knew thou wouldst come to me at last!"

She could not speak to him. She was fighting against the tears that came rushing from their source to drown her bravery; and she must not weep—she *would* not. Oh for a little time to lay her weary head upon his breast and rest, before she nerved herself once again for the work to be done! How to tell him the fatal news, how break to him her design, she knew not, and in the joy of her presence he seemed to have forgotten everything.

At last she gained sufficient control over herself to say, "The petition has passed the House, but the king is—"

"Inexorable!" said the earl, as her voice faltered. "'Tis only what I expected."

"But some are spared!" she cried in an agony

of grief; "but thou—thou and Derwentwater and Kenmure—"

"Are to suffer," he said gently. "So be it. Our Lord suffered. I am ready."

"But thou shalt not die!" she exclaimed, as she wound her arms about him. "Thou shalt not! I will save thee!"

"Poor child, poor wife!" he said with inexpressible tenderness. "Do not make a woman of me, my Winefred; I can bear all—everything—save thy grief."

"See!" she said, raising herself from his arms and standing erect before him; "I will not shed a tear. I will be strong, if thou wilt promise to do the thing I bid thee."

He raised his hand, as if to put aside something that stood between them, and said in a low, firm voice,—

"I do not know what thou wouldst say, Winefred; but if thou hast formed any hope, any plan for my escape, put it aside, I charge thee. I will not bring down more ruin on innocent heads than I have already done, the thought of which is my greatest sorrow to-day. I cannot escape without involving thee and others in the retribution which would follow. No, no, my heart; let us not speak of it more."

"But I must," she cried in wild despair; "it is all

planned. No one shall suffer. O my lord, do not say me nay. For my sake, for our boy's—think of him without a father in these troublous times—and me, and me. What shall I be without thee?"

She sank at his feet on her knees in a passion of tears; she made no effort to check them now. He could not answer her; he could only raise her to his heart and hold her there.

"Promise me," she begged—"promise me, or I will die too."

"I can promise thee nothing that may touch my name with dishonour."

"It is no dishonour to avoid the death thine enemies design for thee," she answered.

"No, if I betrayed no one by doing so. But how can that be compassed? Alas, my sweet one, these are but idle words, and but win my soul from Heaven."

"They are no idle words," she exclaimed, while her eyes shone with a new light through her tears. "Ah! my dear lord, thou relentest; thou wilt promise to leave it all to thy poor Winefred. Now, farewell, farewell for a few hours. O husband, hold me once more to thy heart, that I may draw the strength I need into my soul! This kiss, and this. I shall be here soon—soon. Look for me soon."

And she was gone, while he stood like one trans-

fixed. He had spoken no word of consent; she had taken that for granted. And now she was gone, and he could not recall her. He tried to revive the heroic resolution he had formed when the idea of his wife's design first dawned upon his mind, but it would not come. Life, after all, was sweet, and liberty and wife and child and home were dear—how dear he hardly realized till now. And the brave man, who thought he had learned to meet his death without a tear, sat down, and burying his face in his hands, wept at the thought of once more looking up to the light of heaven a free man.

CHAPTER IV.

"O thou bloody tower,
Fatal and ominous to noble peers!"
Richard III.

IT was growing gray and cold in the afternoon of that memorable day, the twenty-second of February, when a great lumbering coach drew up at a little distance from the outer gates of the Tower. The driver, who hardly looked like a regular coachman, got clumsily down from his box, opened the coach door, and let down the steps with a great bang and show of business preparatory to assisting two ladies to alight. They both wore long cloaks and riding-hoods, as was the fashion of the time; two other ladies, who remained in the coach, were dressed precisely in the same manner. These were Evans and Mistress Mills, the ladies who had alighted being Lady Nithsdale and a tall, slight woman, Mistress Morgan. Lady Nithsdale stayed but to speak a few whispered admonitions; and then, leaving Mills and Evans still seated in the coach, she, with her com-

panion, crossed the wide road, and at once entered the Tower. Her order for admission—for she had this time come duly provided with that document—being attested, she passed on. As she did so, guards and jailers, messengers and attendants of every kind, doffed their caps and respectfully stood aside. Even their accustomed natures were touched at the sight of this brave woman, the story of whose extraordinary exertions to obtain her husband's pardon had reached their ears, and there was not a man among them but would have gladly heard that she had been successful. But, alas! the order for the execution of the three unfortunate noblemen on the morrow had arrived that day, and they knew that there was no hope. As she had done before, she distributed money among them, and thanked, in her own sweet way, such as had attended on her lord for their kindness to him. Her lips were very white, but her smile was sweet, if tearful; and the women—some of the men's wives and daughters who were there chattering and laughing—at the sight of her pale misery wept aloud, and even the rough men drew their hands across their eyes.

"Nay, my good friends," she said, "I have still hope that my dear lord's life may be spared. After I and my friends have spoken with him, I go straight to her Grace the Duchess of Buccleugh, who has

promised to present a petition to the king with her own hands. Surely we must prevail at last."

But they shook their heads mournfully as the lady and her companion, following the jailer, went on their way.

The earl was restlessly pacing up and down his apartment when his lady and Mistress Morgan entered. In spite of all his endeavours, he had been unable to regain his fortitude since their late passionate interview. For hours he had listened impatiently to every footfall, hoping to see his wife—hoping he knew not what—imagining all kinds of wild improbabilities; and as the day wore on and she came not, a cold apprehension began to steal over him. Her plot had been discovered; she had been arrested; he should die without seeing her again; a hundred terrible possibilities rose before him, till he hardly knew how to bear his solitude. And then—to-morrow! What sort of preparation was this? How meet his end with anything like nobleness and constancy with a mind shattered and unnerved by such conflicting feelings? Better, a thousand times better, she had left him undisturbed. And yet, when the door was flung open, and she he loved so fondly stood before him, he uttered a cry of delight, and heedless of the presence of a stranger, clasped her in his arms.

"Our Lady be praised," he exclaimed, "thou art come!"

"Didst thou doubt I should, dear love?" she asked. "Nay, thy Winefred must be dead before she would give up her purpose."

"And this gentlewoman, Winefred, may I not know her?" he asked with courtly grace.

"This gentlewoman is my good friend, Mistress Morgan," answered Lady Nithsdale with a gaiety of manner she was far from feeling, for she knew she had a difficult part to play, "who, because she is so tall and slight of figure, has been able to wear thy disguise under her own cloak without attracting attention. By your leave, my lord, we will lose no more time in parleying thus, for the light wanes, and we want not candles to spy our doings."

"But, my Winefred," began the petrified earl, "if—"

"Prithee, my dear lord, scare me not with 'buts' and 'ifs.' Thou hast promised this once to do thy wife's bidding.—So, good Mistress Morgan, off with your cloak and hood, and doff the garments of which you have too many.—Quick, my lord; give me thy coat and wig. I have one here will better become the complexion thou shalt have anon."

In good truth Mistress Morgan needed not much bidding; her cloak and hood were laid aside, and

as she proceeded to take off one garment after another, somewhat after the manner of a clown in a circus, the earl's amazement was great.

"There! that will do," said Lady Nithsdale. "You must not make yourself too like a whipping-post, or you will not pass unchallenged by the guards. Your cloak now and hood. So, you are dressed again." Then, turning to her husband, she whispered: "Now, my dear lord, while I conduct this honest woman back to the coach I have in waiting, do thou, I beseech thee, don these petticoats as quickly as may be. I have yet another gentlewoman to whom thou must give audience."

It was in a kind of dream that the Earl of Nithsdale endeavoured to do his wife's bidding, and vainly tried to adjust the unmanly garments. Then with a sudden revulsion of feeling he flung them from him, and replacing his wig, which he had taken off, sat down in a state of gloomy desperation.

"No," he muttered; "a Nithsdale can die, but he cannot do a mean action."

When Lady Nithsdale returned, bringing with her Mistress Mills, who, looking round the apartment with a frightened glance, sank down on a seat and wrung her hands, she saw in an instant that the difficulty she feared with the earl had arisen. Going close up to him, she laid her hand on his shoulder, and

said softly, "What ails my lord? I trust he is not ill at this momentous time."

"Ill in mind, Winefred," he replied sternly. "Why didst thou not tell me thy plans? I cannot adopt such ignoble means to regain my liberty as thou hast provided."

"And what did my lord expect from his wife?" she asked calmly, though her spirit chafed at the delay. "Did he look for her at the head of five or six hundred fighting-men to storm the stronghold of the city of London, and bear him off in daylight in the face of all his warders?"

Her hand slid from his shoulder and clasped his that lay clinched upon his knee. "No," she continued, "thou knowest that were impossible. A woman can only fight with such weapons as she has, and stratagem is the only one left for me."

Still no answer from those sternly-set lips. Then she flung herself at his feet. "O my lord, my love!" she cried passionately, "I have done more ignoble things than this for thy sake. I have begged for thy life on my knees, again and again. Dost hear?—on my knees to yon base usurper. Nay, I will not hush. If walls have ears, what matters it? If thou *wilt* die, I can too. I have been spurned from his feet. Nay, once when I had been forbidden his presence, I waylaid him in his own

apartments in the palace, and to detain him clung to the skirt of his coat. He would have flung me off, but I would not loose my hold; and he dragged me half across the floor, muttering his foreign oaths, till a German 'blue ribbon' tore me away and left me fainting. Is such an insult as this to go unavenged, my lord?"

The earl raised her, and embraced her fondly. "My sweet wife! my Winefred! What thou hast undergone for my sake! Come; I will hesitate no longer."

Mistress Mills, sitting on her seat, forlorn and neglected, had had ample time to repent having been betrayed, as she considered, into such a position. Lady Nithsdale had certainly won her consent by surprise, and had left her no time to think of risks, but had carried her straight off to the Tower at once. The poor woman, not knowing what fearful destiny awaited her, here raised her tearful voice and cried,—

"And me, me, my lady! Alack that I ever left my home! What is to become of me?"

"Good Mistress Mills," said Lady Nithsdale impatiently, "I prithee have no fear. Reach me those petticoats quick, quick, and wipe thine eyes afterwards. Alas, how dark 'tis growing!"

"Winefred," said the earl in a low voice as with rapid fingers she fastened the garments around him,

"I trust thou hast provided that this honest woman will not suffer aught for my sake?"

"No, no," she whispered. "I have provided; do not fear." But Lady Nithsdale did not say that if only she managed to get her lord safely away she and Mistress Mills alike must run all hazards. She wisely kept this thought to herself.

"Now for thy complexion," she said gaily as she produced her pots of colour, after having clipped close the earl's beard, which during his imprisonment had been allowed to grow until it was of considerable length. We must make thee fair and ruddy to suit thy light wig. Thine eyebrows are over dark; we will smirch them over to match. Now for the hood and cloak. Oh, thou art excellent! I should not know thee myself if I met thee in broad day."

And Lady Nithsdale clapped her hands softly, and her sweet face broke into dimpled smiles as she viewed her lord round and round. But Mistress Mills sat like one in a dream. Before her stood the exact counterpart of herself—her double, so to speak; and by slow degrees the truth began to dawn upon her that the earl was about to depart in her stead, and she was to be left behind. Starting up in desperation, she made one stride to the door, but Lady Nithsdale was before her.

"Mistress Mills, good friend!" she said in her

quietest tones, "it is true, as thou seest, that my lord doth personate thee in his departure. But do not, I beg thee, fear aught for thy safety. Stay here in quiet. I swear to thee that I will but deliver him into my good Evans's hands, and will return to thee instantly.—Now, my lord, we are ready; but," she added sternly, turning again to Mistress Mills, who was weeping audibly, "cease weeping; make no noise, nor raise any alarm, as you value your life and liberty. Trust to me, and all will be well." So saying she opened the door—she had bribed the jailer to allow her and her friends a free passage in and out while they took their last farewell of the prisoner—and the earl and she left the chamber.

"Cover your face as if you wept," she whispered, "and walk as neatly as thou canst. We must not hurry, lest we provoke suspicion." And so with a beating heart she went, sending him on before, that she might watch the looks of those who stood about, and likewise the better to cover any awkwardness there might be in his gait.

"I pray thee, good Mistress Catherine," she said in clear tones, as they were passing through the guard-room, "to send my woman to me with such things as I require. I know not why she is so late, knowing as she doth that there is yet another petition to be presented to his Majesty. I will dress me here, so

that I may not leave my lord till it is time to go to her Grace the Duchess of Buccleugh. Hasten her as much as possible; I shall be on thorns till she comes. If I lose this opportunity I am undone, for to-morrow will be too late."

Her voice was firm, or so she strove to make it; but among the men who with their wives and daughters thronged the room there was no feeling but one of compassion for the beautiful woman in her sore distress. So, amid murmurs of pity, they passed unchallenged; a moment more and the earl was free. A few whispered words to the trusty Evans, who met them, and once more the lady entered the dread fortress, and ascended the winding stairs to where, now in silent consternation, Mistress Mills awaited her return.

"He is safe!" whispered Lady Nithsdale. "It is but to give him time, and then we will make our adventure. Come, good friend, help me to build up these cast-off garments of my lord into an effigy that may pass for him, if only for an hour."

So, Mistress Mills, now that the worst was come, gathered up her shattered faculties, and choking down her sighs, but not without many "alacks" and "well-adays" assisted the lady with her work. With the help of the pillows from the earl's bed, they made a shape sufficiently portly to wear the coat and waist-

coat. The long, curling wig was put on the top; and when all was completed, they placed the figure against a table in the dim end of the room, over which a crucifix was hung, with its back to the door.

All was now ready, but Lady Nithsdale still feared to venture forth. Every minute was of the greatest value. If she could only delay the hue and cry for a time, she knew that Evans would bestow her lord in safety. So the two poor women, each agitated by their own fears, sat and waited till an hour had passed. Then, first taking the precaution to draw the string that lifted the latch through the door—for besides its complement of bolts and locks, by which it could be secured from without, there was a strong, old-fashioned wooden latch on the inner side of the door, so as to prevent any one from entering unannounced—they stole out. It was now dark, but at the end of the passage leading to the head of the stairs they saw a glimmering light. The lady's heart failed her as she saw the jailer approaching bearing lighted candles, but her presence of mind did not forsake her. Fortunately she had not closed the door, and she awaited his coming with her hand still upon it.

"Good jailer," she said, "I pray you set the candles down in yonder niche; my lord requests to be alone and undisturbed. My woman has not brought my

tiring things, and it is time I went to her Grace. If I am successful with my petition, I shall return again; indeed, I shall do so in any case. My lord would be alone till then. Look," she whispered, opening the door wide enough for the man to see, in the dim light thrown from the candles he carried, the seemingly kneeling figure, "how he employs his time."

It was a bold stroke; but she was playing a desperate game, and so far fortune had favoured her. To gain time, a little more time, was her thought, and "Our Lady pardon me!" was her unspoken prayer.

The man bowed his head respectfully, and set the candles aside as directed, and the lady closed the door fast. She tried it with as heavy a push as she dared put forth while the jailer stood waiting; then with stately step she followed him down the narrow steps, Mistress Mills in a quiver of apprehension close behind her. She had but to be self-possessed for a few more minutes, and yet Lady Nithsdale's impatience to be out and away grew almost to madness, and it was only by exercising the most powerful control over herself that she kept from rushing headlong. There was still the dreaded guardroom to traverse, with its crowd of supernumeraries. She could hear Mistress Mills sighing behind her. "Holy Virgin, give me strength!" she murmured as she passed the threshold

and saw the faces before her all turned on her—so many eyes all looking, as she thought, into her very soul. What wonder that her face looked scared and white, and that her lips trembled with suppressed emotion. She dared not trust herself to speak; she only bent her head to them and passed on.

"Ah, poor lady!" said the women one to another, "but she carries herself bravely."

They had all but reached the outer door—in another second they would have passed it—when a warder suddenly strode forward and stood in their way.

"By your leave," he said roughly, for the man had been drinking, as had many of his companions. "It seems to me that we have had over many hoods pass here to-night. Let's see the face, mistress, you keep so closely muffled." And in an instant he had jerked the headgear off the head of poor, frightened Mistress Mills. The unmistakably feminine scream that ensued caused a roar of laughter at the man's expense, and he slunk away grumbling in sulky tones.

"What, Master Warder!" exclaimed the earl's jailer, who had seen the whole affair; "you thought to spy the earl's beard under the silken hood. Doubtless you think I do not know my own business, nor that I cannot tell a fair lady when I see one, albeit her inches are something more than common. I tell you

the Earl of Nithsdale is in his room on his knees, as you ought to be before his lady for the insult you have offered to her."

She, poor, suffering, impatient woman, was now so beset with apologies that she could hardly persuade the sympathizing people to allow her to pass out. But the circumstances had given her courage; and bowing her thanks, she drew the arm of Mistress Mills under her own, and motioning them aside, they went forth.

"Holy Mother," she ejaculated, as soon as they were clear of the outer gates, "what it is to stand under God's sky once more! Quick, Mills; not a minute must be lost." And she dragged the bewildered woman across the wide space known as Tower Hill to where in the dim distance the coach was waiting.

"Are you there, Master Mills?" she whispered.

"Ay, my lady," answered poor, miserable Mistress Mills's husband, for it was he who had driven the ladies on their hazardous expedition. "I thought you had both got laid by the heels in yon fearsome place."

"Where is—Evans and—you know what I would ask, Master Mills?" said Lady Nithsdale impatiently.

"I don't know," he answered, "and I'm glad I don't know. I know too much as it is for my safety, my lady."

"Ay, indeed!" sighed his wife.

"For our Lady's sake," exclaimed Lady Nithsdale imperiously, "stand not here bemoaning your condition! What are you, or fifty such, to one we wot of? Nay, pardon me, you are among my best friends; and I will, if I live, repay you for what you have done for me and mine. Now take your wife home as quickly as may be. Where is Mistress Morgan?"

"Fled away, my lady, as if the devil himself was after her, and at home by this, unless he caught her first," said the man with a grim chuckle.

"She did right," said the lady. "Now farewell!" And she turned to leave them.

"But, my lady," cried Master Mills, "what would you do—alone, and dark too?"

"Fear not for me," she answered. "Farewell!" And in another minute Lady Nithsdale was lost in the darkness.

CHAPTER V.

"Well, I must wait and watch withal."

THAT evening the Duchess of Buccleugh was entertaining a brilliant assembly at her mansion on the Thames, when her confidential maid came to her, and drawing her aside, whispered that the Countess of Nithsdale was below, and had bidden her tell her Grace that the petition she had so kindly promised to present to the king would not be needed now; but she prayed her Grace to believe that she would never forget her kindness. Without waiting to apologize to her guests for her absence, the duchess hurried away to see her unfortunate friend; but she was not to be found—neither in the room where the maid had left her, nor in the hall, where the outer door stood wide open to the darkness. As the duchess stood bewildered, some new arrivals, in their great, rumbling chariot, preceded by footmen carrying their flaring links to light the way, told how they had seen a darkly-shrouded figure steal

from the porch and lose itself among the trees and shrubs; and "poor Lady Nithsdale" was thought of with pity just as long as took them to pronounce her name; but the duchess was troubled, and wore a grave aspect for the rest of the evening.

Once again on that eventful night we hear of the devoted wife. The Duchess of Montrose, who had always been her truest friend, was at home and alone, having declined all invitations on the eve of the day of execution of the ill-fated noblemen who were among her nearest friends. She was in her private rooms, and brooding tearfully on the dread events of to-morrow, when Lady Nithsdale was ushered in to her. The duchess started up.

"My dear Winefred, I was thinking of you and that poor child Lady Derwentwater, and here you are!"

But Lady Nithsdale could not speak. She threw her arms about her friend's neck, and wept the tears she had kept back for many dreadful days, while the duchess tried in vain to soothe her.

"Let me weep! let me weep!" she sobbed at last, "or I shall die! Only that they say joy does not kill, I could fancy I must die under the weight of too much happiness."

"Happiness, poor Winefred! Calm thyself, I beg."

"See, I am calm now. Let me whisper in thine ear. He is free! My lord is safe! I know not where he is, but I shall know soon. *I—I* have freed him—my love, my dear lord and husband! Why do you look on me so? Are you not glad? Do you not understand?"

"Yes, yes, my poor friend, only too well. Where are you going? Stay with me to-night."

"I cannot. I am going to find my lord. I only came to tell he is safe. You are glad, are you not? But keep my secret for this night only. Farewell, dear friend."

"Winefred, stay! Alas! you are not fit to be alone. Stay with me."

"How can you ask it? My lord is waiting for me. Evans has him safe—safe. Ah! I have cheated the block of a head to-morrow. Farewell! I cannot stay."

And she tore herself away from the loving hands that would have held her, and fled out of the house; and though Lady Montrose sent out messengers to find her and bring her back, firmly believing that her poor friend had, through her great grief, lost her senses, they failed to discover her, and at last gave up the search.

Meanwhile she for whom they searched was lying utterly beaten down and prostrate, like a poor flower

after a storm has passed over it, in an obscure lodging in Drury Lane, a place of hiding secured for her by her faithful Evans, in the event of the success of their plot. All her wonderful calmness and strength had deserted her; yet she tried to raise her heavy head upon her hand to listen for the one sound she longed for. When would Evans come? Surely there had been time to make all arrangements. Time! why, it was an age since she had parted from her husband, trusting him to Evans's care. What if, after all, he had been recaptured? There was madness in the thought. When would she come?

"O Holy Mother, have pity on me!" she cried, as she flung herself on the bed which stood in the room; and then, strange to say, she fell asleep—tired nature could bear the strain no longer. And when Evans at last did come, she found her mistress sleeping like a tired child—a deep and happy sleep; and that sleep saved her.

Evans knew the value of such a relief to nerves and strength so overtaxed as had been her lady's; but she was perplexed what to do. Wearied herself, she sat down, thankful for the rest, and waited patiently her mistress's awaking. Finding, however, that Lady Nithsdale slept on, she began to move about the room and make little noises, and at last seeing her move, she ventured to speak to her.

"My lady, Evans is here; she has brought a message from the earl."

Lady Nithsdale opened her eyes, and looked blankly into the familiar face above her. The next instant she started up.

"Evans! You here! What news? Quick, my girl; tell me everything."

"My lord is safe!" she answered promptly. "That for your present comfort, madam. Ah! but, my lady, I thought that bemuddled old fool, Master Mills, would have betrayed us all. He thought it was his bonny wife I brought him; and when I whispered him to haste, for 'twas the earl, he fell in such a quake, and cried out so that he was undone, that I thought no less but we should have the watch upon us. So I twitched my lord's sleeve, and we slipped away by Barking Church to a house I wot of, and there I left him till I saw all clear; and now, my lady, where think you he is hiding?"

"Nay, my good Evans, tell me; I cannot guess."

"Why, back again almost into the lion's jaws, where he'll ne'er be looked for, I'll warrant. Close to the Tower, even in that bit house where the coach stood, over against the guard-house. They will hunt him far, my lady; they will never look so near."

"I trust not, Evans. I confess I should feel easier were he farther away."

"Ay, ay, my lady; go farther and fare worse. But I've more to tell yet; I have not been idle. I heard the other night—to think how things turn out—that his Excellency, the Venetian ambassador, goes down to Dover on Saturday to meet his brother coming from abroad, with his coach and six horses, and a lot of his running footmen with him. His Excellency will take more in his train than he wots of; and when my lord is in Dover, the rest is easy work."

"Easy, say you?" exclaimed Lady Nithsdale; "the difficulties seem to grow the farther we go. Alas! how shall we conceal him till Saturday, and how win another disguise? It was easy work to free him from his prison walls compared to this."

"My lady must leave all to me to manage; and surely she is not going to despair now, when she has done so much and so bravely," said Evans, with a shade of reproach in her tone.

"No, no," she answered quickly; "I will not despair. It is this feeling that I—I can do no more—that now my lord's life depends on others. O Evans, can I not go to him? I could bear all then."

"Well, we must be secret. There must be no going in o' front doors, or keeking out o' window panes. There's a back way we might slip along; and once in you must lie close. Mistress Mills and I

will bring some food and wine, as best we can, betimes. Yes, it may be done."

And so the Earl of Nithsdale and his Winefred, his "heart," as he fondly called her, were together once more under happier circumstances than when they parted, only a few hours before, on the dread Tower Hill. What mattered it to them that the room was poor; that the floor was bare, and the walls stained and murky; that the furniture was of the scantiest, consisting of but little else than a wretched-looking bedstead, upon which they lay down that they might talk to each other without being overheard; that, cold as it was, they had no fire and but little to eat? They had

> "That within that passeth show."

And each carried in the heart the spell that can make

> "The cobwebs on a dungeon wall
> Seem tapestry in lordly hall."

Their only sorrows were the thought that they must for a time again be parted, and the grief they felt for the untimely end of the brave young Earl of Derwentwater and the gallant Kenmure, who, unless a reprieve came at the last minute, would suffer on the morrow.

Mistress Evans, in the meantime, had been matur-

ing a little plot of her own whereby the earl might be enabled to leave the country. Since her encounter with Johnnie M'Dougal she had seen him no more, and her comings and goings had been free from all espial. She had an uncomfortable feeling that she had wronged him, and thereby lost perchance a valuable ally; that, after all, he was loyal to the earl's cause; and her better nature prompted her to trust him, and appeal to him for help, while her caution bade her put faith in no man. At last, after a long talk with Master Mills, she decided to send that worthy man to the ambassador's house with a message to Johnnie.

"I pray you tell him naught but that the earl is free, and I would fain say farewell to him before I leave London. Bring him along with you, Master Mills, lest some miscarriage arise; and bid him wear his new livery, that I may see how brave he looks."

So Mills set out, and in time returned, accompanied by the tall young footman, now gorgeous in his new apparel. Certainly he looked as much as possible unlike the awkward, shock-headed herdsman who used to persecute Mistress Evans with his shy love-making.

"Well," said she, as she eyed him from head to foot, "'fine feathers make fine birds,' truly. If I had

met you in bonnie Nithsdale I should not have known you for Johnnie M'Dougal."

"Hae ye brought me here, Mistress Evans, only to mak gibes on me?" asked he.

"No," she answered gravely. "I have not been over easy in my mind since we two met last, and I've thought I was hard upon you, and that maybe you are the honest lad you seem; and if it like you, I would be friends with you."

Johnnie's face was a study. He blushed like a rose all over his fair face. Pleasure, surprise, and incredulity by turns succeeded one another, and he bashfully took the hand she offered him.

"Is it the braw coat ye wad be friends wi'?" he asked. "There is nought else changit aboot me, Jeannie; I'm aye the same as ye ca'd coward, an' varlet, an' ither names that ill become yer bonnie lips. But gin ye wad be friends, the bit word is too sweet to my ear to say a churl's nay to."

"Then we will be friends, and you will forgive me, Johnnie," she said, smiling in her most bewitching manner.

"Forgie ye? O my woman, my Jeannie, what wad I not forgie ye for sic a smile; an' for ae kiss o' those red lips, I wad, I believe—gude save us!—sell my very soul."

She suffered him to draw her towards him till his

lips almost touched her cheek, then she suddenly shook herself free.

"No, no; I'm not that bad. No; when I give my lips, I give my heart too. But come, tell me—what of the earl's escape? Is it the talk of the town? Tell me, is it not wonderful?"

"I think ye can tell me mair o' that story than I can," said Johnnie, the bright flush of newly awakened hopes fading from his face. "But gin ye willna trust me—weel; but I wad like to ken my lord and his bonnie leddy were safe awa—eh, Jeannie?"

"Ay, safe enough," she replied unblushingly; for she still feared that Johnnie might be a spy in the employ of the government. "They who seek them will have to go far before they find them. But here comes Master Mills, and you must even have a cup of wine before you leave."

Meeting Mills as he entered the room, she whispered something in his ear, and he in the same manner answered her.

"Never fear, mistress; there is not a drop more nor less than you told me in the stoup."

Taking the cup in her hands she raised it to her own lips, then handing it to Johnnie she said gaily,—

"Drink to my lord's health and long life, and that of his winsome lady, and to our better understanding of each other, friend Johnnie."

He took the cup and held it up at arm's length, and said with glistening eyes,—

"To my lord's health an' lang life, an' to my leddy too, an' lovin' thoughts to her I lo'e dearer than a' else i' the wide world. Gin it were my death potion," he added simply, "I think I wad drink it an' dee, sae ye wad believe me leal an' true."

In an instant she had dashed the cup from his lips, and crying out that she was a wicked woman, fled from the room; while Johnnie stood in bewildered astonishment gazing at the cup, the spilt wine, and Master Mills's blank face.

"What means it a'?" he asked at length.

But Master Mills did not seem to know what to answer, and muttering something inaudibly, he too went away.

Johnnie could hear a distant sound of weeping, and tones of remonstrance from other persons. Completely mystified, he did not know whether to go or stay; but presently the door opened and Evans appeared. There could be no doubt that she had been weeping, and Johnnie's tender heart was touched by her tearful eyes. He went towards her and would have taken her hand, but that she drew back.

"Don't touch me," she cried. "I am come to tell you what I meant to do, only my heart failed me. There was laudanum in that cup of wine. Oh, do

not think I meant to kill you, Johnnie. I but wanted to sleep you while Master Mills stole your livery from you. It was not true when I said my lord was safely away. He is in hiding with only the woman's gear he escaped in from the Tower. We have not known how to get him off, or how to disguise him; and it came into my head that he might go to Dover in my lord the ambassador's train in your place, and none the wiser. And O Johnnie, I do believe now that you are leal and true, but I was afraid to trust you."

"Ay, it's that that hurts me, Jeannie—ye couldna trust me!" And poor Johnnie turned away, for he felt his eyes grow dim with tears; but in a moment he spoke again.

"My coat, an' what my coat hides—my heart too," he said with simple earnestness—"are at my lord's service, an' ye an' my leddy might ha' kenned that. I will bide in hidin' the while my lord gaes to safety. O Jeannie! but ye've made my heart sair." And with that he left her, to seek Master Mills, to make arrangements to exchange his livery for a suit of that gentleman's very roomy garments, while Mistress Mills at once prepared to carry the new disguise to the earl.

Late as it was, it was considered expedient that this should be done at once. Johnnie was shut up

with good Master Mills and his "sair heart," and did not see Mistress Evans set forth to accompany his wife. Certainly Johnnie would not have known her had he met her in the broadest of daylight, and by this time it was dark as a February day can be between eight and nine in the evening. Evans, disguised as a youth in a "wig of light brown lank hair, a dark brown frieze coat, double-breasted on each side, with black buttons and button-holes, a light drugget waistcoat, red shag breeches striped with black, and black stockings," walked boldly by her side through the narrow, intricate streets that lead to Tower Hill.

Not a word was exchanged between them as they walked briskly on, till they came within sight of the "bit house" which Evans had described to her lady. Just before reaching it, Evans laid her hand on her companion's arm.

"Stop here," she whispered. "We must not go to the front. The house is kept by a gude Scottish woman whom we trust, but there may be others there that we wot not of. Follow me."

So saying, Evans turned down a dark entry, and threaded her way to the back of the dwelling in question. All was dark and still, and Mistress Mills, poor woman, wondered what new peril was in store for her.

As she stood, her heart quaking with undefined fear, Jeannie put her ear to the closed shutter of the little window near the door which opened out on the narrow lane they stood in. Holding her breath, she listened intently; then apparently satisfied, she rapped on the shutter one clear, defined knock with the knuckle of her forefinger, then two more, then again three distinct but by no means loud raps followed. In a few seconds the door was softly unfastened and opened. Snatching the bundle Mistress Mills carried, Evans whispered in her ear,—

"Bide here, on your life; wait till my leddy joins ye with your ain clothes ye lent to the earl. When she comes to ye, make your way home with her as quick as may be, and speak to no one on your way."

Evans disappeared into the darkened house, and Mistress Mills stood with her back against the cold wall, shivering with fear. Evans, perhaps unconsciously, had spoken with so much suppressed fierceness in her manner that she was completely overcome. Many a mental vow did she make that, once free from all this "coil," she would "neither meddle nor make in such like matters again—no, not for all the wealth o' the world."

How long she stood there, the tears running down her cheeks, she could not have told; to her it seemed

an age, though in reality it could only have been some ten or twelve minutes, when a soft voice murmured her name, a hand was placed under her arm, and she found herself walking swiftly away with Lady Nithsdale; and instead of Johnnie's livery she carried away her own garments, which she had much feared she would never see again.

"Ah, my lady—"

"Hush!" replied Lady Nithsdale; "do not call me that, and do not speak at all lest we attract notice. Evans says— But hush! stand aside. I am certain I hear rapid footsteps behind us. I am overwrought to-night.—Holy Mother, save us from pursuit!"

The footsteps grew nearer and louder, and drawing Mistress Mills into the shadow of a deep doorway, they tremblingly awaited the owners of those ringing strides now close upon them.

They passed—two figures, one tall and one looking quite short by the side of the first. A rift in the murky clouds that had covered the heavens all the evening allowed the moon to throw at that instant a gleam of light upon the passers, and they saw Johnnie's brilliant livery and Mistress Evans's sober suit borne gallantly by on the shoulders of the two beings on whom all Lady Nithsdale's hopes of happiness depended.

"Now our Lady be praised!" she exclaimed passionately. "So that they be safe from pursuit, I care not what becomes of me. Come, good Mistress Mills; take me to your home. Methinks I can sleep to-night."

CHAPTER VI.

"After hours with sorrow, chide us not."

THE next day Lady Nithsdale returned to her lodging in Drury Lane, there to await with what patience she could command the news of her husband's fate. Dreary indeed was that waiting, and eagerly she looked each day for some tidings; but further than the fact brought to her by Evans that he had certainly got safely off in the retinue of the ambassador, and was surely clear of London, she knew nothing.

I cannot tell how long this cruel suspense lasted, but one day, when her despair of ever hearing anything of her lord again seemed as though it would drive her to distraction, Evans entered radiant with delight, bearing a letter which Johnnie had received in a parcel containing his livery, which until now had been sorely missed by him, as he had been obliged to keep out of sight of his master till its return.

How eagerly Lady Nithsdale seized it and broke

the seal need not be told. The well-known writing of her beloved lord swam before her eyes as through tears she read :—

"My Wife, my Winefred,—I am here safe on French land. Well I know how thou hast pined to know this much. I found a friend at his Excellency's house at once, one Master Mitchell, a private servant to his lordship, who concealed me in his own room till Saturday, when I came forth and mingled in the throng of attendants which set forth for Dover. The going there greatly tried my powers ; but it was well the roads were bad and his Excellency's coach could not make much way, so that I could keep some pace with it. I know not how it would have been with me had I been forced to run with it, seeing that I have had no learning in such matters. Then, too, we stayed one night on the road, and I was glad of even my bed of straw in a windy barn with some twenty others. They little thought whom they had gotten amongst them.

"When we had got to Dover, Master Mitchell soon made a bargain with the captain of a small trading vessel to carry me and him over, for he has taken so much liking to me that he left his Excellency's service there and then, with neither let nor leave. So I am well cared for by the faithful fellow, and

only want 'my heart' and my boy with me to feel that all my troubles are well over.

"But before that can be, I would have thee to petition the king for thy dower, as I hear the other poor wives and widows who are wrecked on the fatal sands of rebellion are about to do. Also there are the deeds of our estates and thy jewels and money to get from Nithsdale. Alas, my sweet wife, what hast thou not to fight with yet before I can hold thee once more to my heart, and thank thee for all thou hast gone through and suffered for me!—Thy loving and devoted husband,

"NITHSDALE."

Many more pages might be written, could we tell of all the trials that still beset the undaunted Lady Nithsdale; but of these, more exclusively attaching to herself, she has left little record. Her husband's life, his and her son's interests, were her first care; she, in her unselfish devotion, was in her own estimation but "an unconsidered trifle." The news of Lord Nithsdale's successful escape, and of his heroic wife's presence in London, soon reached the ears of the king, who was highly incensed with her thus setting his commands at defiance. Every movement was watched and reported to him; and as she had many sympathizing friends in London with whom she was a welcome

visitor, she was informed that as long as she remained in retirement she would be safe, but that if she showed herself abroad, either in England or Scotland, she would be arrested and thrown into prison.

But there was still the safety of her son to care for; the title-deeds which she had buried at Nithsdale, which none but she could recover; her jewels, money, and other valuables which must be had in spite of royal prohibition. So once more daring everything, she returned to her home, and arranged all her affairs to her satisfaction. The parchments and other family documents were found to have suffered no damage from their burial during her absence, as we learn from the letter she wrote afterwards to her sister-in-law, Lady Traquair; and so, having collected all she possibly could, she once more returned to London.

This last defiance of the king's commands completed Lady Nithsdale's disgrace. He declared that "she did whatever she pleased, in spite of all his designs, and that she gave him more trouble than any other woman in Europe." So when her petition for her dower was sent to him with those of the other ladies whose husbands had been concerned in the rebellion, the king said that she was not entitled to the same privilege as they, and refused to have even her name mentioned to him, so much hatred and animosity did he feel towards her.

And so it came to pass that Lady Nithsdale, finding that all her prayers and petitions were in vain, yielded to the entreaties of her friends, who greatly feared she would be imprisoned if she remained in England, and turned her face towards the land where the earl never ceased wearying for her presence. Without her his life was not worth having, and had she been arrested he would have returned to London, though but to share her fate. We are not told how they lived, but we know that their estates were confiscated, and Lady Nithsdale's dower denied to her; that their young heir was disinherited; that, save for friends, they were beggared in everything but the love which had upheld them through more trials than, happily, fall to most people.

* * * * *

Evans, when at last her lady left England, was left alone, for her mistress would not hear of her sharing their poverty with them. She had never seen Johnnie since that day when, after making her confession, he left her, the damsel feeling very small and guilty. She was very unhappy; and now that all excitement was over, and she had leisure to meditate on past events, her conduct to the simple, true-hearted young Scot looked to her very black indeed. She knew that he was still in the ambassador's household, but he had never been near Master Mills's house

since the day he left it; and Evans was in despair. He had shown himself capable of nobler things than she had thought possible, and the quiet dignity of his behaviour and the pitying forbearance he had shown her had completely humbled her; and now that he was no longer her lowly suitor, she learned, to her cost, the worth of the love she had trifled with and scorned. Still she was proud, and did not like to send for him, knowing that he had only too good cause to refuse to see her.

But she must earn her living somehow. The money her lady had given to her would not last for ever, and she could not much longer intrude on the hospitality of the good-hearted Millses. So, before deciding on her future course, she resolved on seeing Johnnie once more.

"Master M'Dougal," she said, when Mills, who had been dispatched to bring him, had left them alone, "my work in London is done. I came but to assist my lady. I am going away—somewhere—no matter where; but before I go, if ever I am to have a peaceful mind again, I hope you will forgive me, though I well know I do not deserve it of you."

Johnnie thought he had stifled all love for her; but to see her standing before him, so humbled, so sorry, was more than he could well bear. But he still thought he ought to struggle against the feelings

which threatened to overwhelm his good sense, and though he took the proffered hand, he answered calmly,—

"Mistress Evans, gin it is sae sma' a matter as my forgieness that stan's 'twixt ye an' a peacefu' mind, ye needna lack it for lang, for I gie it freely, an' wish ye weel." And then, though he still held her hand, he was silent.

She did not thank him, nor answer. She was wondering whether all the love he had for her was really dead; and thinking this, she raised her eyes to his face to read the truth, if possible. What she saw there must have been favourable, for she whispered,—

"Is it all gone, Johnnie?" He did not speak, but the hand he held was pressed more warmly. "Do you remember saying that you would almost sell your soul for one kiss o' my lips? You need not do that, Johnnie; you can have it now, if you will, an' my heart with it."

We are not told his answer, but Mistress Mills was heard to affirm that she never saw such a pair of lovers in her life; and it is certain that Mistress Evans did not leave London, and that before many months had passed she wrote to Lady Nithsdale in her foreign home, and signed herself Jeannie M'Dougal.

In that foreign land where Lady Nithsdale had

rejoined him who owed to her devotion his life and liberty, we leave them, certain, at least, of this, that though far away from their beloved Scotland, exiles from all they held dear, poor as they must have been, yet, in the holy and ennobling affection that filled their existence with warmth and life, they were still rich in the "peace of God that passeth all understanding."

THE END.

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